# MARCHING ON NIAGARA

EDWARD STRATEMEYER

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After him tumbled a wild cat.—*Page 160.*

Colonial Series

# MARCHING ON NIAGARA

OR

## THE SOLDIER BOYS OF THE OLD FRONTIER

BY

EDWARD STRATEMEYER

Author of "American Boys' Life of William McKinley," "Lost on the Orinoco," "On to Pekin," "Between Boer and Briton," "Old Glory Series," "Ship and Shore Series," "Bound to Succeed Series," etc.

*ILLUSTRATED BY A. B. SHUTE*

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MARCHING ON NIAGARA

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# PREFACE

"MARCHING ON NIAGARA" is a complete story in itself, but forms the second of several volumes to be known by the general title of "Colonial Series."

In the first volume of this series, entitled "WITH WASHINGTON IN THE WEST," we followed the fortunes of David Morris, the son of a hardy pioneer, who first settled at Will's Creek (now the town of Cumberland, Virginia), and later on established a trading post on one of the tributaries of the Ohio River. This was just previous to the breaking out of war between France and England, and when the French and English settlers in America, especially in those localities where trading with the Indians was profitable, were bitter foes. David becomes well acquainted with Washington while the latter is a surveyor, and when Braddock arrives in America and marches against Fort Duquesne the young pioneer shoulders a musket and joins the Virginia Rangers under Major Washington, to march forth



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and take part in Braddock's bitter defeat and Washington's masterly effort to save the remnant of the army from total annihilation.

The defeat of the British forces left this section of the English colonies at the mercy of both the French and their savage Indian allies, and for two years, despite all that Washington and other colonial leaders could do, every isolated cabin and every small settlement west of Winchester was in constant danger, and numerous raids were made, savage and brutal in the extreme, and these were kept up until the arrival of General Forbes, who, aided by Washington and others, finally compelled the French to abandon Fort Duquesne, and thus restored peace and order to a frontier covering a distance of several hundred miles.

Following General Forbes's success at Fort Duquesne (now the enterprising city of Pittsburg), came English successes in other quarters, not the least of which was the capture of Fort Niagara, standing on the east bank of the Niagara River, where that stream flows into Lake Ontario. This fort was of vast importance to the French, for it guarded the way through the lakes and down the mighty Mississippi to their Louisiana territory. In the expedition against Fort Niagara both David and Henry Morris take an active part, and as brave

young soldiers endeavor to do their duty fully and fearlessly.

In the preparation of the historical portions of this work the author has endeavored to be as accurate as possible. This has been no easy task, for upon many points American, English, and French historians have differed greatly in their statements. However, it is hoped that the tale is at least as accurate as the average history, giving as it does statements from all sides.

Again thanking the many readers who have taken such an interest in my previous works, I place this volume in their hands, trusting they will find it not only entertaining but likewise full of instruction and inspiration.

EDWARD STRATEMEYER.

*Independence Day,* 1902.

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# CHAPTER I

## IN THE FOREST

"Do you think we'll bag a deer to-day, Henry?"

"I'll tell you better about that when we are on our way home, Dave. I certainly saw the hoof-prints down by the salt lick this morning. That proves they can't be far off. My idea is that at least three deer are just beyond the lower creek, although I may be mistaken."

"I'd like to get a shot at 'em. I haven't brought down a deer since we left the army."

"Well, I reckon we had shooting enough in the army to last us for a while," returned Henry Morris, grimly. "I know I got all I wanted, and you got a good deal more."

"But it wasn't the right kind of shooting, Henry. I always hated to think of firing on another human being, didn't you?"

"Oh, I didn't mind shooting at the Indians—some of 'em don't seem to be more than half human anyway. But I must say it was different when it came to bringing down a Frenchman with his spick

and span uniform. But the Frenchmen hadn't any right to molest us and drive your father out of his trading post."

"I'm afraid General Braddock's defeat will cause us lots of trouble in the future. Mr. Risley was telling me that he had heard the Indians over at Plum Valley were as impudent as they could be. He said half a dozen of 'em made a settler named Hochstein give 'em all they wanted to eat and drink, and when the German found fault they flourished their tomahawks and told him all the settlers but the French were squaws and that he had better shut up or they'd scalp him and burn down his cabin."

"Yes, Sam Barringford was telling something about that, too, and he said he wouldn't be surprised to hear of an Indian uprising at any time. You see, the French are backing the redskins up in everything and that makes them bold. If I had my way, I'd get Colonel Washington to raise an army of three or four thousand men—the best frontiersmen to be found—and I'd chase every impudent Frenchman out of the country. We won't have peace till that is done, mark my words on it," concluded Henry Morris, emphatically.

David and Henry Morris were cousins, living with their folks on a clearing not far from what was then known as Will's Creek, now the town of Cum-

berland, Virginia. The two families consisted of Dave and his father, Mr. James Morris, who was a widower, and Mr. Joseph Morris, his wife Lucy, and three children, Rodney, the oldest, who was something of a cripple, Henry, who has just been introduced, and little Nell, the sunshine of the whole home.

In a former volume of this series, entitled "With Washington in the West," I related the particulars of how the two Morris families settled at Will's Creek, and how James Morris, after the loss of his wife, wandered westward, and established a trading-post on the Kinotah, one of the numerous branches of the Ohio River. In the meantime Dave, his son, fell in with George Washington, when the future President was a surveyor, and the youth helped to survey many tracts of land in the beautiful Shenandoah valley.

At this time the colonies of England and of France in America were having a great deal of trouble between themselves and with the Indians. Briefly stated, both England and France claimed all the territory drained by the Ohio and other near-by rivers, and the French sought in every possible way to drive out English traders who pushed westward.

The driving out of the English traders soon brought trouble to James Morris, and after being

attacked by a band of Indians he was served with a notice from the French to quit his trading-post in three months' time or less. Unwilling to give up a profitable business, and half suspecting that the notice was the concoction of a rascally French trader named Jean Bevoir, and not an official document, Mr. Morris sent Dave back to Winchester, that they might get the advice of Colonel Washington and other officials as to what was best to do.

When Dave arrived home he found that there was practically a state of war between the French and English. Washington was preparing to march against the enemy, and to get back to the trading post unaided was for the youth out of the question. Such being the case, Dave joined the Virginia Rangers under Washington, and with him went his cousin Henry, and both fought bravely at the defense of Fort Necessity, where Henry was badly wounded.

The defeat of the English at Fort Necessity was followed by bitter news for the Morrises. Sam Barringford, a well-known old trapper of that locality, and a great friend to the boys, came in one day badly used up and with the information that the trading-post had fallen under the combined attack of some French led by Jean Bevoir and some Indians led by a rascal named Fox Head, who was

Bevoir's tool. James Morris had been taken prisoner and what had become of the trader Barringford could not tell.

Poor Dave, cut to the heart, was for looking for his father at once, and his relatives and Sam Barringford were equally eager. But the trading-post was miles away—through the dense forest and over the wild mountains—and the territory was now in the hands of the enemy. Under such circumstances all had to wait throughout the severe winter and following spring, a time that to the boy seemed an age.

General Braddock had been sent over from England to take charge of affairs against the French, and soon an expedition was organized having for its object the reduction of Fort Duquesne, which was built where the city of Pittsburg now stands. The expedition was composed of English grenadiers brought over by Braddock and several hundred Virginia Rangers, under Washington. With the rangers were Dave and Barringford. Henry wished to go, but was still too weak, and it was felt that Joseph Morris could not be spared from the homestead.

Braddock's bitter defeat in the vicinity of Fort Duquesne came as a great shock to all of the English colonies, and it was only by Colonel Washing-

ton's tact and gallantry, and the bravery of the rangers under him, that the retreating army was saved from total annihilation or capture. During this battle Dave was shot and captured, but his enemies soon after abandoned him in the woods, and while wandering around, more dead than alive he fell in with White Buffalo, a friendly Indian chief, and, later on, with Barringford and with his father, who had been a prisoner of the French since the fall of the trading post.

The home-coming of Dave and his father was viewed with great satisfaction by Joseph Morris and his family, who did all in their power to make the two sufferers comfortable. From Mr. Morris it was learned that the pelts stored at the trading post had been saved through the kindness of another English trader, so that the Frenchman, Jean Bevoir, and his Indian tool, Fox Head, had not gained much by the raid.

"I am certain that the raid was not the work of the French authorities," said James Morris. "But now the war is on they will of course stand up for everything Jean Bevoir and his followers have done. Nevertheless, I hold to it that the trading post, and the land staked out around it, is mine, and some day I shall lay claim to it."

"Right you are, brother," came from Joseph Mor-

ris. "And, so far as I am able, I will stand by you in the claim. But I am fearful that matters will be much worse before they are better."

"Oh, there's no doubt of that. This victory will make the French think they can walk right over us."

"Yes, and it will do more," put in Rodney, who was now a young man in years. "Many Indians have been wavering between taking sides with us or the enemy. Now many of these will stake fortunes with the victors,—that's the usual way." He stretched himself on his chair and gave a sigh. "I wish I was a little stronger, I'd join the army and fight 'em."

"We haven't any army to speak of now," resumed James Morris. "When I was last down at Winchester Colonel Washington had but a handful of soldiers,—all the rest having gone home to attend to their farms and plantations—and over at Will's Creek fort it was no better. The pay offered to the soldiers is so poor nobody cares to stay in the ranks. Patriotism seems to be at a low ebb."

"It's not such a lack of patriotism," said Joseph Morris. "None of our home soldiers liked the ways of the troops from England, and it made them mad to have their officers pushed down and Braddock's underlings pushed up. Even Washington had to remonstrate, although they tell me he was

willing to fight no matter what position they gave him. And matters are going no better in the North. Either England and our colonies must wake up, or, ere we know it, all will be lost to the French and their Indian allies."

"What of the Indians?" put in Mrs. Morris. "Have those under White Buffalo gone over to the French?"

"White Buffalo's braves have not," answered her husband. "But the tribe is badly split up, and White Buffalo himself is nearly crazy over the matter. He says some of the old chiefs swear by the French while the younger warriors all cling to Washington. White Buffalo says that he himself will never lift a tomahawk against the English—and I feel certain he means it."

"White Buffalo is a real nice Indian," came from little Nell, who sat on the door-step playing. "Didn't he make me this doll? If they were all as good as he is I wouldn't be afraid a bit." And she hugged to her breast the crude wooden figure, the "heap big pappoose" with which White Buffalo had gained her childish confidence.

"Nor would I be afraid," came from Mrs. Morris. "But all Indians are not as kind and true as White Buffalo, and if they should ever go on the

war-path and move this way—" She did not finish, but shook her head sadly.

" If they should come this way we will do our best to fight them off," said James Morris. " But let us hope it will never come to that. The butchery at the trading post was enough, I should not wish to see such doings around our homestead."

## CHAPTER II

### DEER AND INDIANS

DAVE and Henry had left home an hour before, hoping to bring back with them at least one deer if not two. Henry was a great hunter, having brought down many a bird on the wing and squirrel on the run, and he knew that if he could only get a fair sight at a deer the game would be his. As old readers know, Dave was likewise a good shot, so it was likely that the youths would bring back something if any game showed itself.

It was a cool, clear day, with just a touch of snow on the ground, ideal weather for hunting, and as the boys pushed on each felt in excellent spirits despite the talk about the Indians. So far as they knew there was no Indian settlement within miles of them nor were there any wandering redskins within half a day's journey.

"Hullo, there go half a dozen rabbits!" cried Dave, presently, and pointed through a little clearing to their left.

"Don't shoot!" cried his cousin, although Dave

had not raised his flint-lock musket. "If you do you'll scare the deer sure—if they are within hearing."

"I wasn't going to shoot, Henry. But just look at the beggars, sitting up and looking at us! I reckon they know they are safe."

"Since the fighting with the French there hasn't been much hunting through here, and so the game is quite tame. But they won't sit long—there they go now. Come."

The pair resumed their journey through the forest, Henry leading the way, for he had been over this trail several times before. Birds were numerous, and they could have filled their canvas bag with ease, had they felt inclined. But the minds of both were on the deer, and to Henry at least it was such game or nothing, although Dave might have contented himself with something smaller. Yet both knew that Mrs. Morris would look forward with pleasure to getting some fresh venison for her table.

At length the pair reached the lower creek which Henry had mentioned. Here the stream which flowed past the Morris homestead split into several arms, one flowing through a wide clearing and the others entering the forest and passing around a series of rough rocks and a cliff nearly fifty feet high. At this point the forest had never yet felt the weight

of the white man's axe and trees had stood there until brought low by storm or the weight of years.

"Go slow now," whispered Henry, as he caught his cousin by the arm. "If they hear us the game is up."

"The wind is with us," returned Dave. Nevertheless, he slowed up as desired, and then the pair moved forward with extreme caution, each having seen to it that his firearm was ready for immediate use.

Suddenly Henry came to a halt and dropped almost flat behind a rock, and Dave instantly followed. Coming around a short turn they had caught sight of four deer, standing hoof-deep in the water drinking. All the heads were down, but as the youths looked in the direction that of an old buck came up with a jerk and he sniffed the air suspiciously.

"Take the nearest," whispered Henry, softly and quickly. "Ready?"

"Yes," was the low reply.

There was a second of silence and then the two guns spoke as one piece, the reports echoing and re-echoing throughout the mighty forest and along the cliff. The deer Henry had aimed at fell down in the water, plunging wildly in its dying agonies, while that struck by Dave hobbled painfully up the bank.

The others, including the old buck, turned and sped off with the swiftness of the wind.

"Huzza! we have 'em!" shouted Henry. "Come on!" and he leaped to his feet with Dave beside him. Not far off a dead tree lay across the stream and they quickly climbed this, so as not to get their feet wet. When they gained the spot where the deer had been drinking they found Henry's quarry quite dead. The deer Dave had hit was thrashing around in some brushwood.

"I reckon he'll want another shot," said Dave, and reloaded his firearm with all speed. Then he primed up and approached the deer, but before he could pull trigger Henry stopped him.

"He don't need it," came from the older youth. "Save your powder and ball. I'll fix him."

Giving his gun to Dave, Henry rushed up behind the deer, at the same time drawing the long hunting knife he had lately gotten into the habit of carrying. Watching his chance he plunged the knife into the deer's throat. The stroke went true and soon the beast had breathed its last.

"Good for you," cried Dave, enthusiastically. "No use in talking, Henry, you were cut out for a hunter. You'll be as good as Sam Barringford if you keep on."

"Oh, you did about as well as I did, Dave," was the modest rejoinder. "But this is a prime haul, no use of talking. Mother will be tickled to death."

"I reckon we'll all be pleased—we haven't had deer meat for some time. But we're going to have some work getting these two carcasses home. No use of trying to get those other deer, is there?"

"Use? Not much! Why that old buck must be about two or three miles away by this time. Say, he was a big fellow, wasn't he? I should like to have had those horns, but I knew there was no use in fetching him down,—his meat would be too tough and strong."

"I fancy the best we can do is to make a drag for each deer and each pull his own load home," went on Dave. "If we leave one here the wolves and foxes will soon finish the meat."

"Yes, that's the only way. And we might as well hurry, for it is getting late and it will take us a good three hours to get back with such loads."

They were soon at work, Henry with his hunting knife and Dave with his pocket blade, cutting down some long, pliable brushwood which would make excellent drags for both loads. Their good luck put each in good humor, and as he worked Dave could not refrain from whistling, his favorite airs,

being, as of old, "Lucy Locket Lost Her Pocket" and "The Pirate's Lady, O!"

The brushwood cut, they lost no time in binding their loads fast, and then Henry led the way along the watercourse, without crossing to the trail they had previously pursued.

"It's almost as near this way as the other," he said. "And I reckon it will be a bit easier pulling."

"Well, make it as easy as you can, Henry. It's no light load, I can tell you that. Sam Barringford was once telling me how he dragged three deer from Plum Valley to Risley's new place, over the snow. I don't see how he did it."

"Oh, it's easy when the crust of the snow is hard enough—the drag goes like a sled. But I admit Sam is a wonderfully powerful man."

"Indeed he is. Why, it was a sight to see—the way he fought when Red Fox and his followers attacked the trading post. He was a whole host in himself."

Inside of quarter of an hour they had reached a bend in the stream, and now Henry left the watercourse and pushed on over a low hill backed up by a series of rocks.

"It will be a slight pull up hill," he said. "But it will save us nearly half a mile. We can rest a few

minutes when we get to the top. When we get up there I'll show you the spot where I saw those four bears three years ago."

"Don't know as I want to meet four bears just now."

"Oh, the spot isn't on this hill—it's on the hill to the left. Pow-wow Hill Sam Barringford called it. He said it used to be a great Indian resort when the Miamies were in this neighborhood. But the redskins from Shunrum came and drove 'em out."

The top of the rise gained, Dave was glad enough to rest, and both sat down on the trunk of a fallen monarch of the forest, the home now of some chipmunks that fled quickly at their approach.

"There is the spot where I saw the bears," said Henry, pointing with his hand to a clump of trees on the next hill, quite a distance away. "They were in a bunch under that——Hullo! What can that mean?" He broke off short. "Down behind the tree, Dave! Quick!"

The sudden note of alarm was not lost on Dave and in a twinkle both the young hunters were crouched behind the fallen tree. Dave caught his gun and placed his hand on the trigger, but Henry shoved the barrel of the piece downward.

"What did you see?" came from the younger of the youths.

"Indians!" was the short reply. Henry peeped carefully forth. "Yes, sir, Indians, just as sure as you are born. Look for yourself."

"By the king, but you're right!" exclaimed Dave, in excitement. "Two, three—I see four of them."

"I think I saw a fifth—behind that rock to the right. Yes, there he is."

"Can you make out what they are?"

"No, excepting that they are none of White Buffalo's tribe."

"If they don't belong in this neighborhood they are here for no good," said Dave, decidedly.

"I agree with you there, Dave. Possibly they are on a hunt. But why should they come here when there is better game further west?"

"If they are on a hunt it's not for wild animals," came from Dave, significantly. "Have they got their war paint on?"

"I can't see them clearly enough for that."

For several minutes both youths remained silent, watching the distant Indians as they moved around. They had evidently killed some wild animal, although what it was the watchers could not make out.

"If they shot anything it must have been before we reached this neighborhood," said Henry, presently. "I heard no reports."

"Nor I. But never mind that. What shall we do?"

"I don't know, excepting to go home with our game and report them. I don't care to let them see us, do you?"

"Not if they are enemies, and I reckon they are."

"Do you suppose they spotted us?"

"I think not—although you can never tell, they are that cute. They may have a spy working his way over here at this very minute."

"Then let us go on without delay."

It was easy to say this, but how to proceed without being noticed was a problem. Henry's deer lay behind the fallen tree, but Dave's was in front and the younger hunter did not wish to leave his game behind him.

"I'm going to risk it," said Dave, and crawling cautiously around the stump-end of the fallen tree he reached forth and caught one of the ends of the drag. But the task was a difficult one and as he pulled the deer slipped to the ground and the end of the tree branch was suddenly raised high in the air.

"Drop it," cried Henry, and Dave did so. "They must have seen that, Dave. See, two of them are looking this way. We had better clear out and be quick about it."

"I'm going to have that deer," returned the younger hunter, and catching the game by the hind legs he dragged it behind the tree. Then both boys hurried down the opposite side of the hill with all speed. Here they placed both deer on the single drag and continued on their way homeward with all possible speed.

## CHAPTER III

### DISCOVERY AND PURSUIT

It must be confessed that both youths were thoroughly alarmed, and with good reason. Since Braddock's defeat they had heard of the uprising of the Indians at Nancoke, Lusher's Run, Willowbury, and several other small settlements, and had heard of the murder of several German families twenty-five miles to the north of Will's Creek fort, and the murder of Lee Cass, and his wife and four children, thirty miles down the valley. The outbreaks had not resulted from any united efforts on the Indians part, but there was no telling how soon the different tribes would dig up the war hatchet and descend upon all the frontier settlements in force and simultaneously.

From the top of the hill Henry had expected to go straight home, but this course would necessitate the crossing of a clearing quarter of a mile in extent and such a path he now deemed unwise to take.

"If they are following us, it will be dead easy for them to spot us in the open," he said. "We had

better stick to the forest. Of course they can follow the trail of the drag easily enough, but I hate to think of giving up so much meat,—after we had such a journey to bring it down."

"Don't let's give it up yet," pleaded Dave. The deer was the largest he had yet laid low, and he was correspondingly proud of the showing. "Perhaps they aren't after us at all."

On they went, traveling as fast as their somewhat tired limbs permitted. There was another rise to cross, beyond which was a watercourse leading down to the rear of their homestead.

"I think I know where there is a rough raft to be found," said Henry. "And if I can find it, we can place the deer on that and tow them home. We may get wet, but it will be easy work and we can make quicker time than over the ground."

"Right you are, Henry, and remember, water leaves no trail," responded Dave.

They were soon at the side of the stream, which at this point was several feet deep and five to ten yards wide. The banks were thickly overhung with bushes, now, however, bare of leaves. At one spot was an inlet and here Henry pointed out the raft he had mentioned, a crude affair of four short logs lashed together with willow withes.

"We can pull that with ease," said Dave, as he

surveyed the affair. "Come, let us dump the deer aboard at once. We can wade along the bank and ——."

He broke off short and clutched his cousin's arm. His glance had strayed up the stream to a bend several rods away and there he had seen the prow of an Indian canoe and the headgear of several painted warriors.

"By ginger! More Indians!" ejaculated Henry, and both dropped flat on top of their dead game. "How many did you see, Dave?"

"Three or four,—and there are several more!"

"Yes, and they are in their war-paint! Dave, do you know what I think?"

"That they are on the war-path? Oh, Henry, if that is so——." Dave did not finish, but looked anxiously at his cousin.

"If that is so, it means that every homestead for miles around is in danger. And we haven't a single soldier within fifty miles!" added the older youth, with almost a groan.

All the while they were talking they kept their eyes on the Indians, and they now saw the redmen come out on the stream and cross to the side they occupied. Then of a sudden the warriors sent up a shout calculated to strike terror to their hearts.

"They have discovered us! They are after us!" burst from Dave's lips. "What shall we do?"

"We've got to run for it," was Henry's answer. "Hurry up, before it's too late."

"But the deer——."

"We'll have to let them go. Come!"

Side by side they darted into the forest back of the watercourse and made their way with all possible speed between bushes, trees and rocks. There was no trail and neither knew exactly where he was going. Once Dave tripped on some roots and pitched headlong, but he picked himself up in a hurry and, panting for breath, kept on as before.

The retreat of the two young hunters came none too quick, for scarcely had they reached the shelter of the wood when several of the Indians let fly with their arrows, one of which almost clipped Henry's shoulder. This fixed the situation beyond all dispute.

"They are on the war-path, or they wouldn't fire on us," said Dave. "Are you winged?"

"No, but it was a pretty close aim. Who can they be?"

"I believe they are some of Fox Head's dirty band. If they catch us I believe they'll kill us."

"Or keep us to torture," answered the older

youth. "But they are not going to catch us if I can help it—and I think I can."

While the two were talking they sped on and on, deeper and deeper into the forest. Both wished to turn in the direction of home, but did not dare do so, fearing the Indians would be waiting to head them off.

At the start the shouts of their pursuers had sounded unpleasantly close but now they died out utterly. But whether the redskins had given up the chase or were coming on in silence they could not tell.

"I don't think they'll give up so quick," was Henry's comment, as they paused a few seconds to get their breath. "I reckon they've found it doesn't pay to yell. We may get another volley of arrows before we know it."

Once more they went on. Their course was now in a wide semi-circle, calculated to bring them up in the clearing on the east side of their homestead.

"We'll pass Uriah Risley's new cabin," said Dave. "It is our duty to warn him of this danger. He isn't much of an Indian hunter, and if the redskins come here he and his wife will be at their mercy."

Uriah Risley was an Englishman who had settled in the vicinity with his wife several years before. When Dave was once on a trip to Annapolis

with his uncle the two had stopped at Risley's home and been agreeably entertained. Since that time, the Englishman, having grown more accustomed to pioneer life, had moved further westward and built himself a cabin twice as large as that previously occupied. But though the man was a good farmer and wood cutter, he was a poor marksman and hunter, and both he and his wife lived in dread of large wild animals and unfriendly Indians.

As said before, night was coming on, and under the lofty trees it was dark. They had now to pick their way with care, for fear of falling into some dangerous hole. Half a mile more was covered when Henry called a halt. Dave was glad of this for he had stepped on a loose stone but a moment before and given his ankle a nasty twist.

"I'm wondering which is the most direct road to Risley's," said the older youth.

"I believe that is the direction," answered Dave, pointing with his hand.

"I reckon you are right, Dave. And how far do you calculate we are from his cabin?"

"The best part of a mile."

"I agree again. Let us take a direct course. The Indians must be far to the rear—if they haven't given up the chase altogether."

A few minutes later they were again tearing their

way through the forest, the growth being here so thick they could scarcely pass. Overhead a slight breeze was blowing, but they felt little of this. Far to the westward the sun was slowly sinking behind the mountains, casting long shadows across the tree-tops. Here and there the night birds were tuning up, but otherwise all was as quiet as a graveyard.

The coming of night, and the gravity of their situation, made the boys thoughtful, and for a long while not a word was spoken. Henry was thinking of his parents and his sister and brother, and wondering if they were yet in peril, while Dave's thoughts turned to his father, who had said that morning that he intended to go to Will's Creek fort on business. Was his parent at the fort, and would the soldiers there get news of the coming Indian raid?

Both of the young hunters were thus deep in thought when Henry espied a light directly in front of them. They had just come over a rise of ground and found the light in a hollow between several rocks. It was an Indian encampment, and around the blaze were seated fully a score of warriors, smoking their long pipes, and listening to the speech being made by a tall chief who stood in their midst.

"More Indians!" muttered Henry, and threw

himself flat. "The neighborhood seems to be full of them. Dave, this means an awful uprising! We must get back as fast as we can and warn everybody!"

"I have seen some of those Indians before," whispered the younger youth. "They were in the band that attacked the trading post while father came on here. They belong to Fox Head's band and I believe that is Fox Head himself addressing them, for he had a fox's head trailing over his shoulder, and a fox brush among his head feathers. I'd like to shoot him where he stands. He deserves it,—for all he has done to injure us." And Dave gave his gun a sudden tight clutch which was very suggestive.

"No! no!" interposed his cousin. "If you dropped him the whole pack would be on us like so many wolves. The only thing we can do is to get away and give warning. Let us crawl back to the other side of the rise and go around."

Without delay they started to do as Henry had advised. It was no easy matter, for the brushwood was thick and the rocks sharp and uneven. They had not gone a distance of fifty feet when Henry struck a loose stone and sent it bumping down over a dozen others.

Instantly half a dozen Indians leaped to their feet

and the speech of the leading Indian came to a sudden end.

"The game is up!" cried Dave. "Let us run!" And run they did, as fast as the darkness and the nature of the ground would permit. The Indians came after them, calling on them to halt and then sending forth several arrows and a gun-shot, none of which, however, took effect.

"We are in for it now!" panted Dave, as they came to a halt in a small clearing, hedged in on all sides by rocks and dense thickets. "I'm sure I don't know how to turn, do you?"

"If it comes to the worst, we can take a stand against these rocks," answered his cousin, grimly. "But, come, I think I see an opening."

He moved over to the rocks and stepped cautiously into the darkness. There was an opening they had not noticed before, a crevice several feet wide and both deep and long. Into this he squeezed, and Dave came after him. They pushed forward among the dead vines, leaves and rubbish for a distance of thirty feet, and then halted in what would have been a small cave had it not been for the slit of an opening at the top. With bated breath they waited, while their pursuers gradually grew closer.

## CHAPTER IV

### BURNING OF THE CABIN

It was not long before the two young hunters heard the Indians quite plainly. Evidently the redmen did not deem it necessary to advance with more than ordinary caution for they conversed with each other in a low tone, to which Dave and Henry listened with interest, although they could understand little of what was said.

Presently one warrior took up a position in front of the crevice and not over five yards from where the youths lay concealed. Evidently he was listening for some sound from them, and they hardly dared to breathe. As might be expected Dave at that instant felt a strong inclination to sneeze, but he suppressed the desire, although almost bursting a blood vessel in consequence.

Soon another Indian came up and then a third. A talk lasting several minutes followed, and one warrior started to light a torch. But the others stopped this, fearing it might draw the fire of the whites. Then one redman shifted to the right, an-

other to the left, while a third crawled up over the rocks and through the bushes growing above the opening.

By the time the Indians were out of hearing, and they dared to breathe more freely, the darkness of night had settled heavily and high overhead the stars came peeping forth one by one. They waited a little longer and then Henry caught Dave by the arm.

"What do you think?" he whispered. "Are they gone?"

"I think so," returned the younger lad. "But there is no telling when they will be back. Still I reckon we had better get out of here."

"I agree. But we can't take the course we were following. I think the best we can do is to turn further to the left and strike Risley's from the west," added Henry.

Dave was willing, and as cautiously as possible they climbed back out of the crevice the way they had come. Just as Dave was about to step into the clearing a sudden whirr of noise caused him to jerk back.

"What's that?" came quickly from his cousin.

"Some wild animal," was the answer after a pause.

"Did it attack you?"

"No, but it came pretty close. I thought first it was an Indian leaping up out of the grass."

They moved off, side by side, and each with his gun ready for use. As Henry was the hunter of the Morris family and knew the forest better than anyone, Dave allowed him to do such guiding as seemed necessary. They pursued their course over one rise and then another, and after that followed the windings of a tiny brook which Henry said ran to within gun-shot of the Risley homestead.

They were just making a bend of the watercourse when another wild animal started up directly under Henry's feet. It was a fox resting in a hollow log, and in its anxiety to get away the animal struck against Dave's legs, upsetting him.

"Oh!" cried Dave as he went down. "Help! shoot him!"

"It's a fox!" ejaculated Henry, and as the animal shot past him he made a dive and caught the beast by the brush. The fox gave a snarl and tried to bite him, but ere the head came around the young hunter swung the fox in a circle and brought him down with a dull thud on the log. The first blow was followed by another, which crushed the beast's skull as though it were an egg-shell.

"There! he'll never bother anybody again," said

Henry, as he threw the beast down. "Wish I had time to skin him. But we had better not lose a minute."

"Henry, you're a wonder of a hunter!" burst out Dave. "I don't believe I could have done that. It was much better than shooting him, for it saved powder and saved making a noise too."

"Sam Barringford taught me that trick—although not on a fox. I once saw him hammer the life out of a limping wolf that way, and he often catches up snakes by the tail and snaps their heads off, whip fashion."

Leaving the fox where it had fallen, they continued on their way along the stream until a tiny clearing was gained. Beyond this was a belt of tall and heavy timber, which, on the opposite side, marked the boundary of Uriah Risley's new land claim, one he had obtained, through Colonel Washington, from old Lord Fairfax, who still resided at Greenway Court.

"I see a light!" said Dave, as they stopped on the edge of the timber. "Look!"

Henry did so. It was a small blaze, apparently, and in the direction where stood Risley's cabin.

"Can that be an Indian camp-fire?" went on the younger hunter.

"I don't think so, Dave. It's worse than that."

"Worse? Oh, Henry, do you think it is Risley's cabin that is burning?"

"Just what I do think. See, the flame is growing brighter. Either it's the cabin or that cattle shed he has been building. Come on; we'll soon know."

Henry now set off on a run through the timber, picking the way with all the skill of an old frontiersman. Dave kept close behind his cousin. As they advanced they saw the fire more plainly and beheld it spread out and mount further skyward. It was Uriah Risley's cabin beyond a doubt, and now the new cattle shed had caught and was also being consumed by the devouring element.

"This is the work of the redskins," panted Henry, as they leaped over rough rocks and tore their way through a clump of saplings. "And it proves beyond a doubt that they are on the war-path."

While he was speaking a gun-shot sounded out, coming from a great distance. Another report followed and then all became as silent as before.

"That must be Risley, or somebody else, fighting the Indians off," said Dave. "We'll have to be careful or we'll run into a trap."

"Keep in the timber," answered Henry. "For all we know there may be a hundred redskins in this vicinity. Hark! They are around the cabin sure enough."

They listened and amid the crackling of the flames they now heard the whooping and yelling of a score of Indians, while the flickering glare showed to them the dusky forms moving in one direction and another. Some of the Indians had found a demijohn of liquor belonging to the Englishman and were gulping this down in great glee, while others paraded around with various spoils of war in their hands.

"I'd like to give 'em a shot—they deserve it," muttered Dave.

"Don't you do it," interposed Henry, hastily. "They'd be on us like a wind-fall."

"What do you suppose has become of Mr. Risley and his wife?"

"Heaven alone knows, Dave. I trust they have escaped."

"If that was Mr. Risley shooting, do you suppose his wife is with him?"

"There is no telling. Perhaps he wasn't home when the Indians came up. If that's so then Mrs. Risley is either dead or a prisoner."

"Was she alone?"

"I think so—at least I didn't hear of anybody going over lately."

"I wonder if we can't get a bit closer without being seen? Perhaps we can learn something to our advantage."

"We might skirt the timber a bit. But be careful, and if the Indians come for us we had better run without stopping to fire,—unless, of course, they get too close," added Henry.

Once again he led the way, slowly and cautiously, flitting from one tree to another in absolute silence. The fire was now at its height, lighting up the sky for a long distance around. The sparks were blowing in their direction, but the light fall of snow had wet the trees and brushwood, so no harm was done.

Presently they found themselves again close to the brook, which at this point crossed a garden patch that Uriah Risley had gotten into shape the season before. At the side of the brook was a roughly constructed milk-house, made of large stones for walls and untrimmed timbers for a roof. Behind this the boys crouched, to take another view of what was going on in the center of the clearing.

The Indians who had been drinking from the demijohn were growing hilarious and their wild whooping could be heard for a long distance. At the start of the fire some furniture had been hauled forth, a chest of drawers and a bureau, and now some of the redmen set to work to break open both articles, to see what they contained.

"They are after everything of value they can lay

hands on," muttered Dave. "What a shame! Do you see anything of——?"

The young hunter broke off short, for at that instant came a low moan of pain from the interior of the milk-house.

"Are you—you white people!" came in a gasp. "If you are, for the love of heaven—sa—save me!"

"It's Mrs. Risley!" burst out Dave, for he remembered that voice well. He raised his head up to a crack in the rude planking. "Mrs. Risley, are you alone?" he questioned. "It is I, Dave Morris, who is speaking."

"Dave Morris!" A groan followed. "Oh, Davy, lad, save me, won't you? I am almost dead!"

"I'll do what I can for you, Mrs. Risley. My cousin Henry is with me. We were out hunting when the Indians almost captured us. The woods are full of them. Is Mr. Risley around?"

"No, he went to Will's Creek on business. I saw the Indians coming and I tried to run away. But they shot at me with their arrows and one passed through my left shoulder. Then I pretended to go into the house and hide, and when they came in I leaped through a back window and ran for this place. I got into the water up to my shoulders and pulled a bit of a board over my head, to keep out of sight. They came down here and I thought sure they'd find

me, but they did not. But I am nearly perished with the cold, and the wound from the arrow has made me very faint. You will help me, won't you?"

"To be sure we'll help you," put in Henry. "But all we can do at present is to lead you into the woods, and you can have my dry jacket if you want it. We had better start directly for our house."

"I see a glare of a fire. Have they—they——?" The poor woman could not finish.

"Yes, I am sorry to say the cabin is about burnt up," said Dave. "But come, if your husband isn't around, we had better not waste time here. We may be needed at home. It may be just as bad there, you know."

Both of the young hunters crawled around to the milk-house door and went inside. The board was quickly raised and they helped Mrs. Risley from the watery hole in which she had been squatting with her chin resting on her knees. She was so chilled and stiff, and so weak from her wound, she could scarcely stand, and they had literally to carry her into the timber whence they had come.

## CHAPTER V

### UPRISING OF THE INDIANS

SUPPORTING Mrs. Risley between them, the two youths did not stop until they had passed into the timber for a distance of five or six rods. They had crossed the stream once more and now reached a slight knoll from which they could see the cabin, which still blazed away, although the roof and one side had fallen in.

The faint light from the conflagration, sifting through the bare tree branches, was the only light they had, and by this they set the sufferer down and proceeded to make her as comfortable as possible. As fortune would have it, Dave wore two jackets, both somewhat thin. One of these he gave to Henry, who in turn gave his thick jacket to Mrs. Risley.

"You—you are quite sure you can spare it?" she asked.

"Yes, yes," answered Henry. "I am sorry I can't give you something to put over your dress, but I haven't anything. Before you put on the jacket let me bind up that arrow wound."

They could see the cabin, which still blazed. — *Page 38.*

There was now no time to stand upon ceremony and she allowed him to dress the wound with all the skill he could muster, Dave in the meantime keeping watch, that the Indians might not surprise them. Fortunately Henry, having suffered similarly himself, knew what to do, and after he had finished Mrs. Risley announced that the sore place felt greatly relieved.

"But I don't see how I can travel far," she said, trying to stand up. "My limbs are all in a tremble under me."

"We will help you along," said Henry, sympathetically, and Dave echoed the words.

With the wounded woman between them, it was no easy matter to pick their way through the black forest and more than once one or another stumbled over a tree root or into a hole. Looking back, they saw that the fire was now dying down. The whooping of the redmen also lessened and finally ceased altogether.

"I know you wish to get home," panted Mrs. Risley, presently. "But—but—I cannot go—go another step!" And with these words she pitched forward and would have gone in a heap had not their strong youthful arms supported her.

"She has fainted," said Henry, "and it is not to be wondered at. Come, here is something of a

shelter in between the rocks and those trees. We may as well let her rest there, for we cannot carry her all the way home."

"But the delay—" began Dave.

"Surely you don't wish to leave her to her fate, Dave?"

"No! no! You know me better than that, Henry, but I was thinking of those left at home. They may be in trouble, too, and if so they will need us."

"I've been thinking of a plan. I'm stronger than you and perhaps I can get her along alone, after she recovers. Can you find the house from here?"

"I think I can. The creek is just beyond that next patch of timber, isn't it?"

"Yes, in that direction." Henry pointed with his hand. "If you find everything all right you might bring father back to help—if he isn't afraid the Indians will arrive in the meantime."

So it was arranged, and without loss of another moment Dave started on his solitary way through the somber woods, now as silent as the grave, for the wind had gone down and the last of the night birds had given their final calls.

Under ordinary circumstances Dave would have been sleepy, for the day's tramping had been sufficient to tire anybody, but now all thoughts of rest were banished and he was as alert as ever as he

stole forward, gun before him, and his eyes shifting from one dark object to another, on the lookout for a possible enemy.

Dave was in the midst of the next patch of timber,—some beautiful walnuts and chestnuts,—when he saw something glimmer through the darkness far to his left. He was immediately interested, wondering what the light could be. He came to a halt and gazed attentively in the direction.

"It must be an Indian camp-fire," he mused. "What a lot of the redskins there must be in this vicinity!"

He was about to move on, giving the fire a wide berth, when something prompted him to turn toward it, to make sure that it was not the encampment of friends. It might possibly be Barringford or some other trapper in the woods, and if so to pass him by would be far from wise, since such a person might be able to afford just the assistance needed.

Careful of every footstep taken, Dave gradually drew close to the camp-fire. There was a small, dry clearing, fringed by a series of low rocks, and behind these rocks the young hunter crouched. The sight that met his gaze held him spell-bound.

The camp-fire in the center of the clearing was divided into two parts, one to the east and the other to the west. That in the east was beset with sharp

stakes while its companion was being used for cooking purposes.

Around both camp-fires were fully thirty Indians; all more than ordinarily hideous in their daubs of red, blue, and yellow war paint, and their crowns of colored feathers and strings of animals' teeth and human scalps. The redmen had been marching around the camp-fires but now they halted and all sank cross-legged upon the soil.

Suddenly, after a second of silence, one Indian, tall and straight, leaped to his feet and holding his arms out at full length before him began to rock his body from side to side, Then he ran for one of the fires, and pulling a sharp stick from its place in the ground smote the burning end on his breast.

"This is the fear Spotted Wolf has for the English," he cried, in his native tongue. "Even as he has pulled this stake from the ground so will he pull the English from their cabins and burn them at the stake. The English shall flee at the sound of his war whoop, and the children of the English shall die of fright when he draws near. The French are our friends but the English will be our enemies so long as one of them is allowed to live. I will go forward to kill! Spotted Wolf has spoken."

He sat down, and immediately another warrior leaped up and with another burning stick went

through the same performance. "I am called Black Eagle," he cried, "because I have eyes that never sleep and a strength handed down to me from Elk Heart, my father, and Janassarion, my grandfather, he who slew the mighty Little Thunder of the Delawares. Our medicine men have spoken and the English must be driven out like wolves in the winter season. If we allow them this land, and the French the land to the north and the west, where shall the Indian find his hunting ground when he would hunt, and where raise his wigwam when he would rest with his squaw and his children? I, too, will kill and burn until our land knows them no longer! I have the strength of ten white men and I will use it. Black Eagle has spoken."

He had not yet finished when two others sprang up, followed by others, until nearly all were again on their feet, talking of their alleged wrongs and boasting of their strength, and promising each other to do all in their power to wipe out all English settlers west of the Blue Ridge mountains. The bragging was often ludicrous, yet it was easy to see that the Indians were working themselves up into a state of mind where they would hesitate at nothing in order to accomplish their purpose.

Dave could understand only a few words of what was said, yet, from having such scenes described to

him by his father and Sam Barringford, he knew that this was a "big war talk," as White Buffalo called them. Once he fancied he heard his Uncle Joe's name mentioned and his heart almost stopped beating. Surely they must be planning an attack on his home, and that for very soon!

"I must get back and give the warning!" he told himself. "Henry will have to do the best he can with Mrs. Risley. If they get to the cabin and kill Uncle Joe, what will become of Rodney, Aunt Lucy and little Nell? Oh, I must get back!"

Turning, he crawled from the spot with care, and once back into the timber, commenced to run, with his gun slung over his shoulder and his hands held out before him, to keep from running afoul of any obstruction. More than once he bumped into a tree or fell sprawling over some exposed roots, knocking the wind out of him. But he always picked himself up and went on again with undiminished speed. Indeed, the nearer he got to home the greater was his fear that something might have happened in his absence and finally he fairly flew, when he reached familiar ground.

"Hi! who goes there?"

It was a call from close at hand and it made Dave jump as though stung by a snake. He whirled

around, to behold a man behind a tree, a leveled gun in his hands.

"Don't shoot!" he called out, for he fancied he knew the voice. "Is that you, Mr. Risley?"

"Yes. Dave Morris, is it not?"

"Yes." Dave ran to meet the Englishman. "Tell me quickly is everything all right over to our house?"

"It was all right when I left, an hour or so ago, lad. But your uncle had been talking to Hans Lomann and said the German had heard of something of an Indian uprising."

At this Dave gave a sigh of relief. But immediately his heart sank, at the thought of the news he had to impart to his friend.

"The Indians are rising, all over this section of the country. They attacked your cabin."

"My cabin!" The Englishman could scarcely utter the words. "Davy, is it the truth? And what of my wife—tell me quickly!"

"Your wife is safe, although she got an arrow through the shoulder. The redskins attacked the cabin and set fire to it. She leaped out of a rear window and hid in the milk-house. Henry and I came up just in time to get her into the woods. We ran as far as we could and then she fainted. Henry

said he would stay with her and told me to come on and give the alarm. We were afraid the Indians had attacked our place, although we didn't hear any shooting or see any fire."

"Then the cabin is destroyed? But never mind that. You are sure the wound wasn't fatal?"

"Quite sure, for Henry dressed it as well as he could. But she was very weak from having been in the water under the milk-house floor so long."

"And where are they now?"

"About a mile or more from here—in that direction. But you want to be careful. There are Indians all around here—one band is over yonder holding a war talk—and I'm sure they'll show you no mercy if they catch you."

The Englishman nodded his head half a dozen times. "I know it, lad, I know it. They are a bloodthirsty set. Sometimes I am sorry I came to this country to settle among them. But times were bad with us in old England, and we had to do something. But you'll take me to my wife, won't you, that's a brave lad."

"I—I don't know," faltered Dave. He was still anxious to go home. "Perhaps you can find them alone."

"I'm not equal to it, lad—the forest is almost as much of a mystery to me as the day I landed here.

Do come, and then we can all go back to your home with all possible speed."

The young hunter could see that Uriah Risley was sorely distressed, and unwilling to add to the man's misery, he consented to go back, although he knew the way was full of ever-increasing perils. Soon they were on the way, and tired as he was Dave set a pace that caused the settler to puff and blow to keep up with him.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DISAPPEARANCE OF HENRY

It must be confessed that though he walked swiftly, Dave's heart was anything but light. Turn the subject as he might he felt it "in his bones," as he afterward declared, that a big uprising was close at hand and that this might mean the wiping out of every pioneer for scores of miles around.

"The soldiers at Will's Creek fort and at Winchester ought to know of this," he observed to Uriah Risley. "Someone will have to carry the news."

"Perhaps someone has already done so," was the Englishman's answer. He heaved a sigh. "So the cabin is to the ground. Alack! it was a sorry day when I pushed to the front instead of taking up ground close to Winchester, as the good housewife wanted me to." And he shook his head dolefully.

In moving toward the spot where he had left Henry and Mrs. Risley, Dave took great care to steer clear of the camp-fires of the various Indians he had encountered. This was no easy task and more than once they came close to running into a "hornet's nest," as he called it.

Once Uriah Risley gave a cry of alarm and came close to discharging his fire-arm. A wolf had slunk across their path in the darkness and the Englishman took the form to be that of a sneaking Indian.

"A redskin! He will scalp us!" he cried, and was on the point of pulling the trigger when Dave stopped him.

"No! no!" It's only a wolf!" cried the youth. "Don't waste your powder and ball. Besides, a shot will arouse every Indian for quarter of a mile around."

"A wolf? So it must have been." Uriah Risley drew a long breath and lowered his musket. "He gave me a good scare, I must vow."

"Hush! It won't do to talk so loud," went on the boy. "For all we know the Indians may be trailing us and be ready to pounce on us at any moment."

These words caused the Englishman to glance back apprehensively, and hurry on faster than ever. "It's a beastly woods," he said. "I wish we were out of it."

"We are safer here than in a clearing," was the answer. "Come close behind me and keep quiet, and I think we'll be safe."

On and on they went. Dave's lower limbs ached and trembled under him, for he was now almost

fagged out and it was only will-power that kept him up. Slowly they climbed the last rise of ground. At a distance glowed the dying embers of a camp-fire.

"There's a redskins' nest," said the youth, as he paused for a moment. "But it looks as if they had deserted the place."

"Then we'll have to be doubly cautious, lad. They may be scattered in this vicinity."

"You are right. But I hope not, for we are now close to where I left your wife and Henry."

With added caution Dave crept forward another couple of hundred feet. Then he stopped and peered around him in perplexity.

"What is it, lad?"

"They are gone!"

"Gone?"

"Yes, gone."

"You are certain this is the spot?"

"I am. I know it well, by this fallen tree and that rock. They have moved to another quarter—or else——"

"Or else the redskins have attacked them and carried them off," finished Uriah Risley. He gave a groan. "Oh, lad, what is best to do now? Tell me, for you are better versed to this sort of thing than I."

"I—I don't know what to do," faltered the young hunter, staring first at the helpless man before him and then at the gloomy surroundings. "Wait a minute, and keep your hands on your gun. But don't shoot me or Henry or your wife by mistake."

Leaving Risley in the center of the little opening Dave started to walk around in a wide circle. He did this with extreme caution, his head bent close to the ground and his eyes noting every root and rock that covered his path. Then he took another circle, still wider, and at last came back to where his companion stood, the picture of misery and despair.

"I found nothing," he said, in reply to the Englishman's questioning. "They are gone, and I don't believe there are any Indians close to us. I'm going to make a light and risk it."

He brought forth his flint and tinder and soon had a tiny light, which he applied to some dry leaves and then a stick of wood which was full of pine pitch. This latter made a fairly good torch, and holding it close to the ground he continued the search.

Suddenly he uttered a cry of horror. He had come to a spot where the ground was torn up by many footprints. Close at hand was a white birch tree and on its bark were several spots of deep red.

"There has been a fight," he said, as Uriah Risley came closer. "See how they struggled. There is blood on the tree and there is a bit of cloth torn from Henry's jacket—or rather, the jacket I left him." Dave gave a deep shudder. "I—I wonder if Henry is dead?"

"My wife, my poor, poor Caddy!" moaned Uriah Risley, and for a moment covered his face with his hands. "Oh, lad, this is monstrous, monstrous! Heaven help her if she is in the power of such savages!"

"Yes, heaven help them both," returned Dave.

Torch in hand, the youth followed a bloody trail through the forest until it ended abruptly by the side of one of the numerous streams in that vicinity. Here he came to a halt, and as Risley rejoined him both stared vacantly at each other.

"Well?" said the Englishman.

"They went up or down the stream," answered Dave. "But which way I can't say. But one thing is certain—neither of them was killed."

"How do you know that?"

"If they were we should have found their bodies. The Indians wouldn't bother to carry 'em off. They'd simply scalp 'em and let it go at that."

"Perhaps they threw the—the bodies into the water."

Dave shook his head. "No, I'm pretty certain they carried 'em off as prisoners."

There was an awkward pause and something like a lump arose in Dave's throat. If Henry was a prisoner and the Indians were on the war-path this could mean but one thing for the youth—burning at the stake or some similar torture. The silence was broken by Uriah Risley.

"It's a burning shame, lad, an outrage. But what can we do now?"

"I don't know what to do excepting to go home and give the alarm. It won't do any good to stay here. The Indians may fall on us half a hundred strong—just as they most likely fell on Henry and your wife."

"But—but I cannot desert my poor wife, my beloved Caddy. She is all the world to me. I'd rather die myself than see a hair of her head injured."

"Then you had better continue the hunt, while I go home. If you should fall in with 'em tell Henry how matters stand. But, Mr. Risley, let me caution you not to be rash, if you catch sight of Mrs. Risley in the hands of the redskins. If you give them the chance they'll burn you at the stake—and it won't help her a bit either."

"I'll try to be cautious, lad. I hate to have you

go, but I suppose after all it's for the best. Do what you can to save Mrs. Morris and little Nell and the rest. Leave me the torch. I'll go up and down the stream a bit and investigate."

A minute more and they had parted, shaking hands in a fashion that meant a great deal. Perhaps they would never again meet in this world. Dave turned away and stole off silently, his eyes staring straight ahead and his throat working convulsively. Ah, how little do the boys of to-day, living in their comfortable homes and surrounded with every luxury and convenience, realize how much their great-grandfathers of those days had to endure in the shape of privation and peril!

So tired that he could scarcely drag one limb after the other, Dave pursued his course through the forest. Fortunately his "bump of locality" was well developed and there was small danger of his getting totally lost, even though he might go more or less astray. It was now beginning to snow again, but it was so warm that the particles of white melted as soon as they fell. Not a star was to be seen anywhere and the way was blacker than ever.

Reaching the first rise of ground, the youth felt compelled to rest and threw himself at the foot of a large tree with his musket across his knees, ready for use should he be surprised. Once or twice his

eyes closed in spite of his efforts to keep them open. But he invariably straightened up, determined to keep awake at all hazards.

"I'll not rest until I know all at home are safe," he told himself. "I must get along somehow." And he staggered up and continued his course.

He had not gone over a rod when he saw something dark moving ahead. The object looked like a pair of Indians, coming slowly toward him, and his heart leaped into his throat. He raised his gun and pointed it.

But ere he was called on to fire he saw the object more distinctly and uttering something of a cry of joy he lowered his weapon and rushed forward.

"Widgeon!" burst from his lips, and in a moment more he had hold of the mane of one of Uriah Risley's horses—an animal that had escaped from the Indians when the shed was set on fire. "Where did you come from? How lucky I am to find you!"

The horse seemed to recognize Dave, for he gave a low whinny and rubbed his cold nose on the youth's jacket sleeve. A broken halter dangled from his neck, but he possessed neither saddle nor bridle. He was covered with a cold moisture, showing that he had run considerably after having broken away.

Having found the horse Dave's spirits arose a little. He led the animal forward and struck out

for a new route homeward, longer than that which he had been pursuing but free from thickets and pitfalls. As soon as he thought it safe to do so he leaped upon Widgeon's back, spoke to the horse, and set off on a comfortable jog, which later on, when the ground became more familiar, he increased to a gallop.

Once Dave fancied he heard Indians in pursuit and holding on to Widgeon's mane with one hand, drew up his gun with the other. But the noises died away in the distance, and after that came no more alarms. At last he came in sight of home and found to his joy that it remained as he had left it, undisturbed.

## CHAPTER VII

### A DOUBLE WARNING

As my old readers know, the cabin of the Morris family was located in a wide clearing, between a fair-sized creek and a brook flowing into the larger stream. When we saw it before, it was a long, low but comfortable building, containing four rooms on the ground floor, and a loft under the sloping roof which was principally used for the storage of winter supplies.

During the past summer Mr. Joseph Morris had made an addition to the cabin by building on at what was the kitchen end. This was now a new kitchen while the old kitchen had become the general living room. The old living room, so called, had been divided into two bedrooms, so that the house was now large enough not alone for the regular family but also for such occasional visitors as came that way.

The coming of night made all of those at home anxious for the return of the two young hunters. Feeling that both would be thoroughly hungry, Mrs.

Morris had cooked a liberal supper, of which after waiting an hour, those in the cabin had eaten their share. The remainder now simmered in the pot and kettle hung over the big open fire, while Mrs. Morris moved uneasily about, clearing away the dirty dishes and occasionally glancing out of the doorway in the direction she fancied they must come.

"It is strange what is keeping them," she said to the others. "I trust they haven't gotten into trouble."

"Perhaps they have struck more deer than they bargained for," answered her husband, who had just entered with a bucket of water from the well. "Henry said he felt certain he would bag something—and he rarely deceives himself when it comes to game. Like as not they'll come along toting all they can carry."

"I wish they'd bring mamma another bear skin," put in little Nell. "Wouldn't it be beautiful—if it matched the one Mr. Washington let cousin Dave have?"

"No! no! A bear might harm them!" put in Mrs. Morris hastily. "It's a bad time of year to tackle such beasts, so I heard Sam Barringford say."

"You let Henry and Dave alone when it comes to any kind of game," came from Rodney, who sat in his easy chair close to the roaring fire. "Why, the

worst game they could meet wouldn't be half as bad as the Indians and French they had to face when they went to war. You forget, mother, what splendid shots both of them are."

But the mother turned away shaking her head doubtfully. Perhaps her instinct told her what grave trouble was brooding. She looked out of the doorway once more and spoke to her husband.

"Did James say when he should be back?"

"He couldn't tell, because he didn't know if he could complete his business right away or if he would have to wait to see certain parties. Like as not he won't come back until to-morrow, or the day after. He knew there was no need to hurry. We can't do anything much on the farm just now."

As even home-made candles were somewhat scarce, the family did without any light excepting that afforded by the fire in the big-mouthed chimney, the genial glare of which threw fantastic shadows on the walls. Little Nell did not particularly fancy those shadows and so asked permission to climb into Rodney's lap.

"Why of course," said the cripple, and took her up at once. Then she insisted that he tell a story, "but not about bears, or wolves, or Indians, but about a fairy and a princess, and a castle full of gold," and Rodney did his best to tell the most mar-

velous story his brain could invent. But long before the good fairy had given the princess a beautiful prince for a husband, and the castle full of gold in the bargain, little Nell was sound asleep, so the story was never finished.

As the night wore on even Mr. Morris began to show his anxiety, and without saying a word he got down his musket from over the chimney shelf and brought forth his horn of powder and his little bag of home-made bullets.

"You are going after them?" asked Mrs. Morris.

"I'll wait a bit longer," he answered. "But I thought I'd be prepared, in case anything was wrong."

Having put little Nell to bed, Mrs. Morris brought forth her knitting and for some time only the click-clicking of the polished needles broke the silence. Then Rodney, who had been sitting with his chin in his hands, watching the burning logs, roused up.

"I don't suppose there is any use of my staying up," he said. "My back doesn't feel quite as well as it did yesterday. I'll go to bed," and he shuffled off to the bedroom he occupied. This was the one nearest to the kitchen, on the south side, and had been given to the cripple because it was warmer in the winter than the others.

Left to themselves, the time seemed to drag more heavily than ever to Mr. and Mrs. Morris. Every thought was centered on their son Henry and nephew David. What could be keeping the pair?

"They must have met with an accident," said the pioneer at length. "Perhaps one of them fell in a hole and broke a leg. I know there are several nasty pitfalls in the vicinity of the salt lick. I guess I had better go out and look for them."

Joseph Morris was soon ready for the journey, promising, whether he found them or not, to be back inside of two hours. He went on horseback, riding Fanny, Dave's favorite mare, the animal that had once been stolen and so fortunately recovered.

Left to herself, Mrs. Morris knitted faster than ever. But even the flying needles could not stop her anxiety, and more than once she threw down the work, to go to the doorway and gaze earnestly in every direction. How dark and lonely the mighty forest looked. Something caused her to shiver in spite of herself. She listened intently.

What was that? A sound at a great distance. As it drew closer she made out the hoof-beats of a horse on a gallop. She ran into the cabin and in true pioneer fashion armed herself with a musket, ready to consider every newcomer an enemy until

he proved himself a friend. Swiftly the horse came closer and she now made out a youth hanging heavily over the animal's neck.

"Dave! is it you?"

"Yes, Aunt Lucy," was the answer. The boy rode up and dropped heavily to the ground. "Are you all safe?"

"Safe? Of course we are. What has happened? Where is Henry?"

"I don't know where Henry is—just now. I left him in the woods doing what he could for Mrs. Risley. The Indians surrounded their cabin and burnt it down, and Mrs. Risley escaped to the milk-house. We rescued her from her hiding place in the water and got her into the woods. Then I started for home, but I met Mr. Risley and had to take him back to where I had left Henry and Mrs. Risley. We couldn't find either of them, and it looked as if they had had a fight. Mr. Risley remained to investigate and I came home as quickly as I could to give the alarm. The Indians are rising all over and are going to massacre everybody they can lay hands on."

While talking Dave staggered into the kitchen and sank down heavily on a bench.

"Mercy on us, Dave, you don't really mean it!

The Risley cabin burnt down, and the Indians on the war-path! Why, we'll all be murdered!"

"We shall be unless we take means to defend ourselves, Aunt Lucy. Where are father and Uncle Joe?"

"Your father has gone to Winchester and won't be back before to-morrow or next day. Your uncle went off a spell ago to look for you and Henry. Are the Indians coming this way? Tell me about Henry."

As anxious as she was the good woman saw that her nephew was not only tired out but also hungry, and as she talked she bustled about and prepared his meal for him at the corner of the table nearest to the fire. Dave devoured his supper in short order, telling all he had to relate at the same time. It is needless to state that Mrs. Morris was greatly alarmed. The loud talking of the pair aroused Rodney, who called from the bedroom to know what was wrong, and when told the cripple lost no time in dressing himself.

"If they come here we'll have to defend ourselves as best we can," said Rodney. "I can't run but I can shoot pretty straight, and if mother will load for us I guess we can give 'em some pretty good shots. What we want to do first of all is to shut all

the shutters tight and get in all the water we can—to drink and to put out fires with. It's lucky father cut those port-holes in the roof. They'll be just the spots to bring down Injuns from."

"My boy, you cannot do it!" cried Mrs. Morris, in increased alarm. "Even if your father gets back what can three do against a horde of redskins? They will fire the cabin and shoot you down the moment you are driven out by the flames."

"Well, I don't believe in letting the rascals have our cabin and belongings," returned Rodney, stubbornly. "I'm only a cripple, but I'm willing to fight to the last. If we run for it, how much can we take along? Not much, I can tell you that."

"Yes, but our lives are more precious to us than our things here," said his mother. "And remember Nell, Rodney. If she fell into the Indians' hands —" Mrs. Morris did not finish, but her breast heaved and two big tears started from her eyes and rolled down her cheeks.

"Well, you wouldn't want to go before father got back, would you?" asked Rodney, after a pause.

"He is coming now—at least I hear somebody on horseback!" cried Dave. "Perhaps it's an Indian," and he reached for his gun, which he had brought in and placed beside the door.

He went out, and Mrs. Morris and Rodney came

behind him, each with some sort of firearm. As the horseman came closer they saw that it was indeed an Indian. But the white feathers and the general bearing of the new arrival soon reassured them.

"White Buffalo!" called Dave, and ran to meet the Indian chief who had been the family's friend for so many years.

"How-how!" returned the Indian, and came straight up to the cabin door. "Where is my white brother Joseph, and my white brother James?" he questioned anxiously.

"Father is at Winchester," answered Dave. "Uncle Joseph went off awhile ago to look for Henry and me. We were out hunting but found out the Indians are rising. Do you know about that, White Buffalo?"

"So the white boy knows the news already?" White Buffalo's face fell a little, for he had hoped to be the first to bear intelligence. "Yes, it is true, they have dug up the war hatchet, and have murdered many people already. I came to help you, and I bring a message from Captain Tanner."

"And your tribe—will they join those who rise against the English?" asked Rodney.

For a moment White Buffalo hung his head on his breast. Then with an effort he straightened up. "Some of the Delawares are fools—they will not

listen to White Buffalo but listen to Skunk Tail and drink the fire-water the French give them. We have had a pow-wow and some would go to the French and some to the English. At Big Tree I left eighteen braves who will follow me and fight for the English. The others have joined Skunk Tail and Fox Head of the Miamis, and the tribes under Rolling Thunder and Canshanran, and will fight for themselves and for the French. They think not of right or of honor, but will burn and murder and steal all they can. A black day and a black night are coming, and how it will end only He who rules the Happy Hunting Ground can tell."

## CHAPTER VIII

### DEPARTURE FROM HOME

It was not until White Buffalo came into the light of the kitchen fire that they saw he was wounded. Blood was trickling from an arrow thrust in the left shoulder. At the sight of this Mrs. Morris uttered a slight scream.

"You are wounded, White Buffalo! Why didn't you say so before? Let me bind it up for you."

"No big heap hurt," answered the Indian. "Only little cut him." Nevertheless, he was glad enough to have the lady of the cabin bind it up, after which he said it felt better.

White Buffalo had but little to add to what has already been narrated excepting that in coming to the cabin to give warning he had fallen in with some rival Indians, three of whom had sought to stop him. A hand-to-hand fight had resulted and White Buffalo had sent one man to earth by a blow from his tomahawk and ridden over a second in such a fashion that the enemy had not stirred afterward. The arrow wound had been received previous to this, but the chief had not noticed it until some time later.

The continued talking had roused little Nell and now she came running out of the bedroom in her robe of white begging to know what was the matter. She gave a scream when she saw the Indian, but quickly recovered when she recognized White Buffalo.

"I thought it was one of the bad Indians," she said, in her simple fashion. "I'm not afraid of you, White Buffalo, am I?"

"White Buffalo glad not," answered the chief, taking her by the hand. "White Buffalo would not harm one hair of little Nell's head," and he stroked the curly top affectionately.

"You said you carried a message," put in Rodney, suddenly. "Where is it?"

From among his feathers White Buffalo produced a single sheet of paper. It was covered with a hasty scrawl, running as follows:

"FRIEND MORRIS: The Indians are rising. I think it best that all settlers in this vicinity gather at Fort Lawrence for safety. Shall send messengers wherever I can. Garwell's cabin is in ashes and himself murdered and Mrs. Garwell carried off, and it is said that Risley's cabin is also burning.

"JOHN SMITH TANNER."

"Captain Tanner wants us to gather at Fort Lawence for safety," said Dave, after listening to the reading by his cousin. "I believe, Aunt Lucy, he is right. The rising is so widespread that it would be foolhardy to remain here. We might—"

The youth broke off short and ran toward the doorway. But White Buffalo was ahead of him. Both had heard the approach of a horse. It was Joseph Morris returning, and he was alone.

"Thank heaven you are safe!" ejaculated the pioneer, as he leaped to the ground and came into the cabin. "I was afraid you might all be murdered. So Dave is here. Where is Henry?"

"Gone," answered Dave. "You saw nothing of him, or of Mrs. Risley or her husband?"

"I did not. But I saw Indians—hundreds of them. They are on the war-path. We must get out of here. There is not a moment to spare."

"Oh, father!" The cry came from Mrs. Morris and she clung close to her husband, while little Nell set up a wild sobbing. "Must we leave it all—everything?"

"All but what we can conveniently carry on horseback, Lucy. I believe the redskins will be here within the hour."

Only a few more hurried words passed, and

Joseph Morris glanced at the note White Buffalo had brought. The Indian looked very grave.

"My white brother Joseph will go to Fort Lawrence?" he questioned.

"Yes. I see no other way. I would rather go to the fort at Will's Creek, but the Indians are covering that trail already. You will stick to us, White Buffalo, won't you?"

"To the death."

The pioneer grasped the chief's hand warmly. "I knew I could depend on you. Where are the braves under you?"

"Two miles from here—at the Big Tree. Say where I shall meet you and if White Buffalo can do it it shall be done."

"We will go to Fort Lawrence by the brook way, —past where you and I shot the bear and her two cubs two winters ago. Meet me on that trail. Hurry, for we may need you sorely."

Without a word White Buffalo darted from the cabin and a moment later they heard him ride away at the best speed his steed could attain.

There was now a great confusion in the cabin. Knowing that she must really leave, Mrs. Morris set to work to gather her most precious things into several bundles which might be carried on horseback. As well as he was able Rodney helped her,

and little Nell also took a hand, bound to save the few precious toys she possessed, including the doll White Buffalo had made for her. It made the good woman's heart ache sorely when she realized how little could be carried and how much of all that was dear to her must be left behind for the Indians to burn or plunder.

While this was going on in the cabin Dave ran to the outbuilding where he brought forth the several horses and saddled and bridled them. Then he let out the live stock, turning the cows into the forest, to shift for themselves. He wanted to take the cows along, but his uncle doubted if there would be time.

While the others worked Joseph Morris looked to all the firearms and got them into readiness for use. Then he rode around the clearing to learn if the trail he had mentioned to White Buffalo could still be used.

"Come, we must go!" he cried, presently. "Hark, don't you hear the distant war-whoops? The Indians are advancing. If we wait another five minutes we may be lost!"

From the cabin came Mrs. Morris, Rodney and little Nell, carrying the several bundles they had made up. Little Nell cried piteously and the silent tears coursed down Mrs. Morris's cheeks.

Fortunately there were horses for all, with an extra animal for some of the bundles. The latter were hurriedly adjusted and fastened.

"Now, Dave, you lead the way," said Joseph Morris. "I will fix things so that the redskins may be deceived when they come up."

"All right, Uncle Joe. But don't stay back too long," was the lad's answer.

Astride of his favorite mare Fanny, Dave headed the silent procession across the clearing, and into the woods. As soon as possible he struck into the brook, that their trail might be hidden by the water. He knew this way well, so there was no hesitation. Behind him came Mrs. Morris and little Nell, and Rodney brought up the rear, with the extra horse. Each carried all that was possible, but the youths had their bundles strapped on, that they might have free hands for their guns, should they wish to use the weapons.

Left to himself, Joseph Morris closed the shutters of the cabin and dampened down the fire with ashes. Then he ran up to the loft, opened one of the port-holes in the roof and placed in it the shining barrel of an old musket which had long ago seen its best days. Behind the musket he placed a pillow upright and on the top an old hat.

When he left the cabin and walked away he

glanced back at his dummy and a smile lit up his bronzed face. At a distance it looked exactly like somebody on guard.

"That will fool them for awhile anyway," was his mental comment. "And even a little time is better than nothing," and he rode off swiftly after the others.

He was soon with them, for on account of the bundles and Rodney's condition they could not make as good progress as they wished. Fort Lawrence was a good twelve miles off and though it was desirable to reach that place before daybreak, it was questionable if they could make the distance.

"If we can't reach the fort by five o'clock we had best remain in the woods until darkness comes again," said Mr. Morris. "Because by morning the fort will most likely be surrounded, even if the redskins remain in hiding."

"I wonder what father will do," came from Dave.

"Oh, he will know enough to look out for himself, Dave. Remember, he is the best frontiersman in the whole family."

"Yes, Uncle Joe, that's true, but if he thinks we are at the cabin and in peril he may do something rash trying to save us."

"As soon as you are safe at the fort I will see what can be done, not only for him but also for

Henry and the Risleys. I am afraid Henry has had serious trouble. Perhaps he is dead," and Joseph Morris shook his head sorrowfully.

Making as little noise as possible, they pushed forward to the point where White Buffalo had promised to meet them with his braves. Too tired to remain awake, little Nell had fallen asleep in her mother's arms, but the others were wide-awake.

Presently a distant gun-shot broke upon their ears. Another followed, and then came a wild whooping and yelling which continued for ten minutes or more. When it started Joseph Morris called a halt, but soon told the others to move on again.

"They have attacked the cabin," he said, sadly. "Those shots were probably aimed at the dummy I set up. They will be in a fearful rage over the ruse and will no doubt do their best to follow us. We must lose no time on the way."

"Won't they know we are bound for Fort Lawrence and try to head us off?" questioned Rodney.

"There is no telling, my son. We must trust to luck and our skill to evade them."

It was not long before a red glare appeared in the sky, in the direction where the cabin was located. All knew what that meant but nobody said a word, for fear of breaking down. But Joseph Morris gritted his teeth in a fashion which showed only too

plainly what was passing in his mind. Given the chance and he would make the Indians pay dearly for the destruction of his property.

Suddenly Dave drew rein and up went his gun, aimed at a figure standing under a tree ahead. But the figure put up an arm and waved it familiarly and the gun dropped to the lad's side. White Buffalo was awaiting them with eleven of his best warriors. The others of the tribe had deserted to the enemy.

"My white friends have been slow in coming up," said the chief. "They have lost precious time. The enemy are on every side. It will be no easy task for White Buffalo to lead his friends to the fort."

"We made as much haste as we could," said Rodney. The rough ride was beginning to tell upon him and he was almost ready to pitch from the saddle through sheer weakness.

A few words more followed, and the trail through the forest was resumed, some of the Indians going ahead and others, including White Buffalo, bringing up the rear, to keep back the advance of any who might be following from the burning cabin.

They were still two miles from the fort when some of the Indians in the front sounded a note of warning. But this was not needed for a minute later they fell in with a neighbor also bound for the

fort. This neighbor had with him his two sons, two daughters and his sick wife, whom they were carrying on a litter.

"No Injuns around here as yet," said the neighbor, whose name was Larkwell. "But they are coming jest as fast as they can. We can't git to the fort none too soon."

## CHAPTER IX

### GATHERING AT FORT LAWRENCE

Fort Lawrence was little more than a fort in name only. It was a spot selected by the Morrises and others living within a radius of one to twenty-two miles, where they might congregate for safety at any time when the way to Will's Creek or Winchester should be cut off.

The fort was located at a point where two small streams joined. Here the brushwood and trees had been cleared off for a distance of little over an acre. Some trees, running in a semi-circle from one brook to the other, had been left standing, and between these a rude stockade had been planted of logs, ten to twelve feet high and sharp-pointed at the top. Along the two watercourses were a series of rough rocks and on top of these other rocks had been placed, making a barrier almost as high as the wooden one opposite. In the wooden stockade and among the rocks, port holes were placed, so that those inside could command every avenue of approach with their firearms. To the whole there was

a rude gateway, but as yet no gate further than some heavy brushwood piled conveniently near,—thorn brush, which all Indians despised.

So far there had assembled at the fort six families, consisting of eight men and seven women, with fifteen children of all ages, from boys and girls of Dave's growth to an infant in arms. These pioneers had brought with them all the earthly possessions which they or their beasts of burden could carry, and these goods were now piled high in the center of the stockade, where there was something of a hollow among the rocks. Back of this pile was a second hollow, rudely thatched with tree branches, and here the women and the smaller children assembled, the little ones either sleeping soundly or crying shrilly for the comforts to which they were accustomed.

Among the men was Captain John Smith Tanner, a Virginian, of mixed English and German blood. Captain Tanner had fought under Washington at Braddock's defeat and also done good work during several Indian uprisings, and this had won for him the military title, which, however, was not of the king's troops but of the local militia. The captain was an out-and-out backwoodsman, a bachelor, and a man well-liked by nearly all who knew him.

As we know, it was Captain Tanner who had

sent the note to Joseph Morris's house by White Buffalo, and now he and several others of the settlers waited anxiously for the appearance of not alone these friends, but of five other pioneers, including Uriah Risley. Eight men to defend both the stockade and the rocks were not many, and the captain felt that should the enemy appear in force matters would speedily reach a crisis with the whites.

"Somebuddy comin'!" shouted one of the watchers, presently. "An Injun!"

"Can you make him out?" questioned the captain, but before the question was fairly finished the watcher continued:

"It's White Buffalo, and some white folks with him."

In a moment more the Morrises and Larkwells came into view, and the thorn-brush was pulled aside to allow them to enter the enclosure. The party rode in one at a time, Joseph Morris being the last to enter. Rodney was so tired and exhausted he could not stand and Dave led him to a seat on a tree stump and then assisted his aunt and little Nell to alight.

"Oh, dear! Where are we?" cried the little girl, who had just awakened. "I thought I was home in bed!"

"You are safe with mamma, dear," answered

Mrs. Morris, hugging her tightly. "We have come to the fort to get away from the wicked Indians."

"And I was asleep all the time? How funny!" Little Nell stared around her. "Oh, there is Mary Lee and Martha Brownley!" she ejaculated. "I'll have company, won't I?"

"Yes," answered her mother, and they joined their neighbors,—if those living miles away could be called such.

The woman on the litter cared for, all the "men folks," which included several who were little more than boys, assembled to map out a plan of action and decide what should be done with White Buffalo and his warriors. The Indian Chief was willing to aid them as much as was in his power, but did not wish to enter the stockade, preferring to fight from the shelter of the forest beyond.

"It is the redman's way," said White Buffalo, "even as it is the way of the wildcat to fight in the darkness. White Buffalo can do more from the outside than from the inside of the fort."

"I reckon you're right, Injun," answered Captain Tanner. "But now you've carried one message for us I rather wish you'd carry another."

"White Buffalo will do what is best for his white brethren."

"I'd like to send word to Winchester, to Colonel Washington, letting him know just how we're fixed here." The captain turned to those around him. "Isn't that a good plan?"

"It is," said one, "but these Indians may give us lots of help,—if the enemy come on us in heavy numbers. They oughtn't all to go."

The matter was talked over, and at last it was decided to let White Buffalo start for Winchester with two of his braves, leaving the other redmen to scatter through the woods and give the alarm on the approach of the enemy. A letter was hastily written to Washington, and White Buffalo started off just as the first streaks of dawn were beginning to appear in the east.

Fortunately for those present, some of the pioneers had brought with them large stocks of provision, so there was no need for anybody to go hungry for a long while to come, should the Indians lay siege to them. Water could also be had in plenty, which was desirable both for drinking purposes and in case of fire.

With the coming of day those in the fort breathed more freely, for they knew that even if the enemy came up it was not likely they would begin an attack until darkness once again settled down. In the

meantime the work of strengthening the defense went on steadily, a laborer only quitting when he found it necessary to lie down for a few hours' sleep.

The Indians had gone out, the thorn-brush had been piled high in the gateway, and for the time being there seemed nothing for the pioneers to do but to sit down and await developments. Several campfires were burning and over these a morning meal was cooked, to which all but one or two invalids did ample justice. The assemblage divided itself into half a dozen groups, each talking in a low tone of the prospects.

The Morrises were chiefly concerned over the fate of Henry. When she thought of her boy perhaps murdered and scalped the bitter tears of anguish rolled down Mrs. Morris's cheeks, and the little the others could do to cheer her up was of no avail.

"From what Dave says there must have been a fierce fight," she moaned. "And more than likely our poor dear Henry got the worst of it. We'll never see the brave boy again!" And her tears burst forth afresh.

"I would go on a hunt for him, only I know it would be next to useless," returned her husband. "Besides, at such a time as this I feel my place is at your side, and with Nell, Rodney, and Dave." And she had to admit that this was true.

Slowly the morning wore along. It had stopped snowing and not a sound broke the stillness, outside of the gentle murmur of the brooks as they met between the rocks, and the songs of the birds in the forest. Not a breath of air was stirring, and as Dave climbed into one of the stockade trees to survey the situation it looked as if no Indians were within miles of them. But this he knew to be untrue, since White Buffalo's warriors could not be far off and the enemy was surely working their way in that direction.

"I fancy it's the calm before the storm," he said to Rodney, who having had several hours of rest felt much stronger. "We'll catch it all the worse when it does come."

"If only I wasn't crippled," sighed Rodney. "I'd fight just as hard as any of 'em."

"I've no doubt of that, Rodney. Well, when the time comes perhaps you'll have your share of the shooting same as any of us. You can watch from a port-hole, even if you have to sit down to it."

"Yes, I've already told Captain Tanner I wanted one of those places at the north brook to-night. I don't intend to let you fellows do the work while I go and sleep. The women folks and the children are the only ones to take it easy."

"Even the women folks will have their hands full

—loading for us—when the real attack begins. The first ten minutes are what counts. It was that way when the Indians attacked father's trading post. If we hadn't put it to 'em hot-like from the first minute we would never have beaten 'em back."

By the middle of the afternoon all that could be done was finished, and then Captain Tanner insisted upon it that the majority of the men and boys lie down to rest.

"You won't get any sleep to-night, so make the most of your time now," were his words. Then he climbed the tallest tree in that vicinity, to take a long and careful look around. But this survey brought nothing new to light.

It was just sundown when the first alarm came in. An Indian carrying a white feather was seen sneaking up to the stockade. Seeing it was one of White Buffalo's followers the captain sent Joseph Morris out to interview him.

"The Indians who side with the French are coming," announced the warrior. "They come by the trail we traveled and by the trail in yonder pathway," pointing with his hand. "They are in four bands, and Gray Tail heard that they will strike to-night when darkness covers the land."

This was all that the Indian could tell, but it was enough, and Joseph Morris ran back to inform Cap-

tain Tanner and the others. Those who were sleeping were aroused, and each man and boy was assigned to his place of duty.

As he had desired, Rodney was placed near one of the brooks. The young man's father was stationed some distance above him and Dave an equal distance below. Next to Dave came a pioneer named Ike Lee, and the others followed, completing the circle of the fort. Then all waited anxiously for a first sign of the advancing enemy, each with his eyes strained to their utmost and with his finger on the trigger of his firearm.

## CHAPTER X

### HOW HENRY FARED

LET us now go back to Henry Morris and find out what occurred to the young hunter and Mrs. Risley immediately after Dave departed from the resting place in the forest.

As we know the tired woman had fainted from exhaustion, and for fully ten minutes Henry had all he could do to restore her to consciousness. He rubbed her hands and wrists vigorously and fanned her face with his cap, and at last had the satisfaction of seeing her open her eyes.

"Oh!" she murmured. "I—I—what happened? Did I—I fall?"

"You fainted I reckon," answered the young hunter, kindly. "The walk was too much for you."

"Yes—I felt I couldn't go another step, Henry. I see we are still in the woods. Are the Indians near?"

"I don't think they are—at least, we haven't seen anything of them."

"Where is Dave?"

"He has gone on ahead, to see if all is right at home, and if it is to bring help."

"I would give all I possess to be at your cabin," said the poor woman, with a sigh. She tried to rise, then sank back heavily. "I—I—don't see how I am going to walk."

"You had better rest a bit longer, Mrs. Risley. "There is no great hurry. It may pay us to go slow—with so many redskins lurking about. They may be—"

Henry broke off short, and thinking his companion was about to speak, clapped his hand over her mouth. Through the stillness of the forest he had caught sounds that could mean but one thing—the approach of several men. In a moment more he caught glimpses of a flickering light approaching.

"We must hide!" he whispered in Mrs. Risley's ear. "Come, there isn't a second to lose!"

"But where shall we go?" she panted, her heart leaping into her throat. "I cannot run a step—it will kill me!"

The young hunter looked around in perplexity. There was some brushwood to their right, growing among some sharp-pointed rocks. He caught his companion's hand and almost dragged her in that direction. On the rocks Mrs. Risley's foot slipped and she gave a cry of pain.

"My ankle—I have twisted it badly!"

"Hush! they will hear!" he answered, and seeing she could go no further, he caught her in his youthful arms and carried her forward. In the midst of a clump of bushes he laid her down and threw himself flat beside her, at the same time holding some brushwood down over them.

By this time the glimmer of light had come closer. It was a torch, held in the hands of a tall Indian, who was following up the trail of the whites with great care. The Indian had with him six companions, all armed with either guns or bows and arrows, and each hideous in his war-paint.

Hardly daring to breathe, Henry awaited their close approach, his left hand holding down the bushes and his right on his gun. Soon the warriors were at the spot where Mrs. Risley had fainted. Here they came to a halt and began to talk in low tones.

It was a moment of intense anxiety, and it must be confessed that Henry's heart almost stopped beating. The warrior with the torch held the light aloft, and all in the party gazed around with eyes as piercing as those of some wild beasts.

In a moment more something happened which changed the tables of fortune. Unable to bear the pain of her twisted ankle, Mrs. Risley drew in a

sharp, rasping breath which sound reached the ears of one of the Indians. Instantly he stepped in that direction and spoke to the warrior with the torch. Three of the band came forward with swift steps and arrows pointed. A yell rent the air, telling that those in hiding were discovered.

Seeing it was useless to remain prostrate Henry leaped up. An arrow whizzed past his shoulder and would have struck him fairly in the breast had he not leaped to one side.

He, too, blazed away, and saw the leading Indian go down, shot through the breast, a serious if not a mortal wound. Then he pulled Mrs. Risley to her feet.

"Run!" he cried. "Run! It is your only chance. Hide in the woods!"

She limped off, but ere she had gotten a dozen steps two of the warriors were after her, and she was made a prisoner. In the meantime Henry retreated to a clump of birch trees and there made a stand against the remaining Indians.

The struggle, which lasted but a few minutes, was an unequal one. Another arrow was fired, and it grazed his left hand, causing the blood to flow freely, and making the stains afterward discovered by Dave. Then one of the red men came up behind the trees, and reaching out struck him with the flat side of a

tomahawk. Henry tried to turn and grapple with his assailant, but suddenly his senses left him and he knew no more.

"'Tis one of the Morris family," said the Indian with the torch, in his native tongue. He made an examination. "He is not dead."

"A good capture," said another. "We must take him along. Gonawak, you must help to carry him."

"And what of the woman?" asked the warrior addressed as Gonawak, well known throughout that territory for his extreme cruelty.

"Talking Deer will take care of her," was the answer. "He is to take care of all of them until this raid is over."

But little more was said, and in a few minutes the unconscious form of the young hunter was picked up and borne through the forest in the direction of the nearest stream. As has been said, water leaves no trail, and for this reason the redmen instinctively used the shallow stream for a roadway.

When Henry regained his senses he found himself strapped to the back of a horse and moving slowly westward through the forest. The wound on his hand had been allowed to bleed itself out. He felt both weak and stiff and had a dull ache in his head,

The warrior with the torch held the light aloft. — *Page 88.*

where the tomahawk had landed and raised a good-sized lump.

By a blaze on the animal's neck, Henry recognized the horse he rode as one belonging to a pioneer living in that vicinity. He was in the company of nine redmen, four of whom were mounted on stolen horses. From this he inferred that the Risley cabin was not the only one which had been attacked on that fatal night.

He looked around, but could see nothing of Mrs. Risley nor of any other captives. He was alone with the savage warriors, and what they intended to do with him there was no telling. But he had good reasons for believing that a horrible fate was in store for him.

"I must get away if I can," he thought. "They can't do any more than shoot me if I try to escape, and even that will be better than to be burnt at the stake."

The Indians now noticed that he had recovered consciousness, and one of them rode closer and said sharply:

"White hunter boy must keep still. If yell will strike him!" And he flourished his tomahawk threateningly.

"Where are you taking me?" questioned Henry.

But the Indian would not answer and only told him to keep quiet.

It was growing morning when the small band came to a halt, at the bank of a wide stream where there was a series of rapids among the rocks. Henry was cut loose and ordered to dismount. Then he was led to a near-by tree and tied up once more.

"Will you give me a drink?" he asked of one of the Indians, but for answer the redman slapped him sharply over the mouth and told him to hold his tongue.

Suffering much from thirst and from the wound on his left hand, which had now begun to swell, Henry watched the Indians as they prepared an early morning meal, for the light of dawn was now showing in the east. A fire of very dry wood, which would give little smoke, was lighted and over this two of the redmen prepared some deer meat they had been carrying. The smell of the cooking venison was tantalizing to Henry, but he knew better than to ask for a portion of the repast. Once or twice the Indians came up to him but only to jibe at him and poke him with their guns or their bows, while one made a move with his hunting knife as if to cut out the young hunter's heart.

While the Indians were busy eating Henry tugged

at his bonds with all the strength he could muster. But he was too weak, and the warriors had bound the rawhides too firmly, for the youth to budge them. He only made his wound break out afresh, and then had to stop, well-nigh exhausted with his effort.

"Getting away is out of the question," he thought, and a heavy sigh escaped his lips. "They will keep a sharp watch on me until they get back to their village and then they will take great delight in torturing me in every way they can think of. Oh, what savages they are, every one of them!"

Thus musing, Henry watched the Indians eat their meal. When they had finished one warrior came to him with some of the scraps and with a cup full of dirty water.

"White hunter boy can eat," said the Indian, and untied one of his hands. It was far from an appetizing meal and was decidedly scant. But it was better than nothing, and not wishing to starve to death Henry ate all that was offered him and drank the water to the last drop. Then his loose hand was once again fastened behind him.

The Indians were now holding a consultation, sitting close to the dying embers of the fire and smoking their long-stemmed pipes. But little of what was said reached Henry's ears, yet he caught the

words "big feast" and "burn at stake" spoken in the Indian tongue. At this he had to shudder in spite of every effort to control his feelings.

"I must get away!" he thought. "I must! I'm not going to allow them to burn me at the stake! It's horrible. I've heard all about old Sol Harper and Dick Waterbury, and how they suffered. I'd rather be shot. They'll—Oh!"

His thoughts came to a sudden end, and for the instant he felt that he must be dreaming. His eyes had strayed to the bushes on the opposite bank of the stream. A white hand was raised warningly and the bushes parted slowly, showing the face of his old friend, Sam Barringford. Henry nodded, to show that he had seen the old frontiersman. Then the bushes closed again and Sam Barringford disappeared.

## CHAPTER XI

### SAM BARRINGFORD'S RUSE

THE appearance of his old frontier friend gave Henry's hopes a bound upward. He felt that he could rely upon Sam Barringford to do his utmost for him in securing his release. He felt equally sure that Barringford had been following the band for some time, trying to gain a chance to rush in and cut his bonds.

It was true that Barringford numbered but one against nine, and would have stood small chance against them in an open fight, but Henry knew the old frontiersman too well to imagine that Barringford would thus expose himself to a stray shot that might kill him. His friend had learned the value of playing a "waiting game," and would do nothing rash unless the occasion actually demanded it.

The best part of half an hour went by, and still the Indians remained around the camp-fire, smoking and discussing the situation. Occasionally one would glance toward Henry and perhaps raise a tomahawk threateningly, meaning thereby that an

attempt to escape would be punishable by death. To these movements Henry paid no attention.

The young hunter's ears were on the alert, for he half expected that Barringford might be coming up behind him to cut his bonds. At last he heard his name mentioned in a low, guarded tone:

"Henry!"

"Sam," he returned, without apparently moving his lips.

"I'm right behind, lad. Do as I tell you and gittin' away may come easy. I'll cut yer rawhides, but don't you attempt ter move till yer hear a noise in the woods an' the Injuns run fer the spot. Then dust straight back, an' I'll jine you fast as I kin. Do you understand?"

"Yes," answered Henry, as softly as before.

"All right. Now tell me when them measly critters ain't looking'. I can't see 'em from here."

After this there was a few minutes of silence. Henry watched the nine redmen as never before. Several faced him, but now they turned away for a moment and he communicated that fact to Sam Barringford.

Instantly a hand glided around the side of the tree and a sharp hunting knife slid along the rawhides which bound the youth's hands and feet. The bonds about the tree were already severed.

"Now I'm goin'," whispered Barringford. "Don't run till they ain't a-noticin' of you—unless, o' course, they come straight at you."

As silently as he had come Sam Barringford retreated, keeping the tree and some brushwood between himself and the enemy. Once more Henry was left alone, and again many anxious minutes passed.

Suddenly from a distance up the stream came a shot, followed by another, and then a well-known Indian war-whoop. The voice of a white man, calling out loudly, was heard, followed by another war-cry, and a crashing and splitting of a tree branch.

Throwing down their pipes all the Indians around the camp-fire leaped to their feet and seized their weapons. With one accord they bounded up the stream to learn what the encounter so close at hand could mean. The war-whoop used was their own. Some of their own tribe must be making an attack or must be in danger.

No sooner had the Indians turned to leave him than Henry dropped his bonds and leaped behind the tree. With all possible speed he rushed straight into the woods. As he progressed he jumped from one rock to another, where this could be done, in order to leave as imperfect a trail as possible.

He felt that the shots, the cries and the war-

whoops, coupled with the crashing of the tree branch, were all a part of the ruse employed by Sam Barringford to make the Indians leave their captive, and in this he was not mistaken. The Indians had gone off to a man, and now, when he felt safe for the time being, Henry was sorry that he had not stopped long enough to gain possession of his gun.

"I can't go back now," he muttered. "They'll return soon—or send one or two back to watch me." He listened for a second. "Hullo! some of 'em are back already! Now'll they'll make it warm for me, if they can!"

He pushed on until he heard a low but clear whistle, not unlike the sound of certain night birds of that locality. He whistled in return and soon saw the form of a man in the distance waving an arm for him to come up.

"Fooled 'em nicely, didn't I?" chuckled Sam Barringford. "They lit out soon as they heard thet war-whoop, didn't they?"

"They did," answered Henry. "But some of 'em are back, so we mustn't lose any time getting away."

"Right you are, lad—'t won't do to try to fool 'em too much—it's too much like playin' with the teeth o' a wildcat, now they hev their war-paint on.

O' course you know the hull country's riz, don't you?"

"Yes, and Risley's cabin has been burnt down and Mrs. Risley is a captive I'm afraid."

"I'm a-feered fer your own folks, Henry. The Injuns is headed that way, seems to me."

As they hurried on through the woods, with ears on the alert for the possible appearance of the Indians left behind or of others, Henry told his story, to which the old frontiersman listened with close attention. In return Barringford related his own doings during the past forty-eight hours.

"I was up to Timber Ridge, back o' Siler's place, lookin' fer deer, when I spotted some o' the Injuns makin' fer the old meetin' ground. I made up my mind they was up to no good, and so I followed 'em. They held a meeting with Little Horn's warriors, and one of 'em had a message from thet rascally Jean Bevoir who robbed yer uncle o' that trading-post on the Kinotah, and the message said not to forget the Morris cabin in the raid."

"Our cabin!" burst out Henry. "Then they will surely attack it."

"Yes, and jest because Jean Bevoir wants 'em to, Henry. Thet rascal ought to be hung. He's wuss nor any redman, to my way o' thinkin'."

"Anyway, we can't get home too quick—at least I can't, Sam."

"I'm with you, Henry. Your folks are my best friends. Besides, I want to learn what has become of Dave. You know what a sight I think o' him," concluded Barringford.

They advanced with caution until Henry felt compelled to rest. Then they sat down by the edge of a tiny stream and here obtained a drink, and the frontiersman washed and bound up Henry's wounded hand. At last they went on once more, taking a semi-circle which brought them in sight of the Morris cabin.

"Too late!" burst from Henry's lips, and his heart sank within him. Against the early morning sky was a heavy cloud of smoke curling lazily upward from the ruins of the cabin and the out-buildings. Around the ruins half a dozen redmen were prowling, on the hunt for anything of value which might have escaped their notice during the darkness of the night.

"Yes, lad, we're too late," responded Barringford, mournfully. "I only trust your folks escaped."

"Let—let us creep closer and see if there are any —any bodies lying around," faltered the young hunter. He was so agitated he could scarcely speak.

"Be careful what you do," was the warning. "Follow me—I think I know a safe lookout place."

Barringford led the way, and presently they found themselves in a clump of brushwood not over two hundred feet from the cabin. The brush was on a rise of ground, so that they could survey the situation with ease.

"Nothing in sight," said Henry, after a long and painful pause. "What do you say to that, Sam?"

"It's encouragin', lad. More'n likely your father got away with your mother an' the others. I don't see none o' the hosses around. Thet's a good sign, too. I believe they struck out fer Fort Lawrence or Will's Creek—most likely the first, fer the trail to Will's Creek is chuck-a-block with Injuns."

Feeling that nothing could be gained by remaining in the vicinity, they started to retreat to the friendly shelter of the forest. They had hardly covered a hundred yards, when Henry gave a cry of warning.

"An Indian! Coming straight for us!"

He was right, and a moment later a painted warrior confronted them. He, too, was surprised at the meeting, but quick as a flash raised the tomahawk he carried to strike Barringford down.

Had the blow landed as intended the frontiersman's skull would have been split in twain. But if

the Indian was quick Barringford was quicker. He leaped to one side and in a twinkling had the warrior by the throat and was bearing him backward. At the same moment Henry advanced.

"Never mind—I've got the consarned critter!" cried Barringford, as he held the Indian in a grasp of steel. "See if more are a-comin'!"

Henry looked, but not another redman was in sight. The one in Barringford's grasp squirmed and struggled and drew up a knee to plant it against the frontiersman's breast. But even this did not break that deadly grip, and now the Indian's tongue fairly lolled from his wide-open mouth. He clutched Barringford's throat, but his hand was thrown aside and the wrist pressed back until it was almost broken. Then the Indian gave a strange gulp and suddenly collapsed in a heap.

"Thet settles his account," panted Barringford, as he staggered away. "An' he didn't git no chance to make any noise nuther. Serves the critter right, don't it?" And he led the way onward once more.

"Yes, it served him right," answered Henry, but even as he spoke he had to shudder, and he wondered if the Indian was really dead or only partly choked to death.

Having decided to move in the direction of Fort Lawrence, Sam Barringford led the way by the very

route Joseph Morris had pursued. Both he and Henry were now exhausted by their long walk, and both would have rested had it not been that they were so anxious to know how matters were going at the fort. On they stumbled as best they could. Each was hungry, yet neither complained on that score.

It was nearly noon when they heard a number of shots in the distance. A fierce yelling followed, and the shooting was continued for the best part of half an hour.

"The Indians have attacked the fort!" cried Henry. "A big battle must be going on!"

"I reckon you are right, Henry. Come," and Barringford set off at an increased rate of speed.

They did not go far, however, for only a little while later they heard a murmur of voices ahead.

"An Injun camp," whispered Barringford. "Come, we'll go around," and he moved to the left.

But here the way was also blocked by Indians. Then they made a wide detour, only to find more warriors encamped between themselves and the fort.

"The way's blocked," said the frontiersman at last. "The critters have entirely surrounded the fort. We're out of it, and it looks as if we'd have to stay out."

## CHAPTER XII

### DARK YEAR OF THE WAR

At the time this story opens George Washington had been on the frontier for nearly two years, with what was little more than a handful of rangers and militia, doing his best to protect a section of country extending through Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. His headquarters were at Winchester, where the fort was in a good state for defence, but he was frequently away from that place, directing minor operations against the Indians, who, urged by their French allies, were continually attacking isolated settlements.

At this time the future President of our country was still a young man, strong, resolute, and full of the fire of ambition. There was no thought of independence in those days. He was a subject of the King of England, and as a subject willing to do his utmost to sustain British authority in America. He was dearly beloved by all the soldiers under him, but it must be confessed that some of these soldiers were

not as willing to remain in the army as was desirable.

The trouble over the soldiers is easily explained. In the first place the settlers objected to doing military duty when called upon to "play second fiddle" to the soldiers brought over from England, and in the second place the pay was poor and uncertain, and the pioneers, much as they wished to defend their frontier and whip the French and Indians, could ill afford to neglect their farms and crops.

"I'd like to enlist again," said one old pioneer to Washington, "But I have a wife and four little children at home, and if I don't care for them they'll have nothing to eat. You know, sir, that I haven't received a dollar of pay for three months." This explanation was typical of many, and while Colonel Washington was sorry to have his men desert him thus, deep down in his heart he could not blame them for wishing to provide for those they dearly loved.

Thus far the conduct of the war with France had been a series of disasters to England's cause, extending over a period of three years. Braddock's bitter defeat, in July, 1755, had been followed by Shirley's abandonment of the plan to take Fort Niagara, and after a bitter battle at Lake George, Sir William Johnson, of whom we shall hear much

more later, was forced to give up his hope of pushing on to Crown Point. This closed the fighting for the year, leaving the outlook for the colonies gloomy indeed.

War between France and England was formally declared in May, 1756—just twenty years before that memorable Revolution which separated the United States from England. The Earl of Loudon was sent out to take command of a new expedition north, but his work in that territory was no more victorious than Johnson's had been, and as a consequence the French commander, General Montcalm, captured Oswego, with all the guns and supplies left there the year previous by Shirley, and in his defeat General Webb, with a large portion of the British troops, had to fall back to Albany.

Early in the following year the English made greater preparations than ever to bring the war to a satisfactory close. Loudon sailed from New York with six thousand men, and was joined at Halifax by Admiral Holborne with a fleet of eleven warships. The object of the expedition was to attack Louisburg, but when the English arrived in the vicinity of that French stronghold they found seventeen of the enemy's warships awaiting them, backed up by heavy land fortifications, and to attack such

a force would have been foolhardy; so Loudon returned to New York much dispirited.

In the meantime, Montcalm was not idle. While Loudon was proceeding against Louisburg the great French general came down with a strong force from Crown Point and attacked Fort William Henry. The fort was compelled to surrender, and did so with the understanding that the soldiers be allowed to march out with the honors of war. But the Indians with the French would not agree to this, and upon a given signal they fell with great fury on the English, slaughtering them right and left, butchering not only the soldiers but also about a hundred women and children who had fled to the enclosure for safety. The barracks were battered down and burned, and the cannon, boats, and stores carried away. For these outrageous proceedings Montcalm was held responsible, but he claimed that the Indians could not be controlled.

The effect of so many disasters to British arms in other quarters, could leave but one impression on the minds of the Indians who threatened the frontier which Washington was trying to defend. These warriors came to the conclusion that the English were too weak to defend themselves, and, consequently, they could rush in and kill, burn, and loot

to suit themselves. They were well aware that the French still held Fort Duquesne, and that if the English came too far westward (in a chase after the redmen,) the French would rouse up in an effort to drive them back from whence they had come. More than this, there were among the Indians such rascally traders as Jean Bevoir, and these men, in order to further their own interests, told the Indians to go ahead and do as they pleased against the English, and that the French would never interfere, no matter how barbarous was the warfare thus carried on.

At this time the population of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia was reckoned at about half a million souls, yet from such a number Washington could only obtain two thousand militiamen and rangers, and, as stated before, this number was constantly decreasing, as one after another refused to re-enlist, for reasons already given. The young commander did all in his power to protect the numerous settlements from attacks, but to cover such a wide expanse of territory was, under the circumstances, impossible. The best that could be done was to station parts of the army at various forts and hold the soldiers in readiness to march forth in any direction from whence should come an alarm.

Colonel Washington had been out on a long tour

"White Buffalo, my brother, has done well to bring this message so quickly."—*Page 109.*

of inspection, and was just settling down for a much needed sleep, when an orderly entered and told him that an Indian messenger had arrived with news.

"Who is the messenger?" questioned the commander, for in those days it was necessary to guard against all possible treachery.

"An under chief named White Buffalo, sir."

Washington knew White Buffalo fairly well, and at once commanded that the chief be brought in. This was done, and the warrior delivered the message written by Captain Tanner with all the ceremony the occasion, to the Indian, seemed to require.

"White Buffalo, my brother, has done well to bring this message so quickly," said Washington. "Fort Lawrence needs help and I shall give all the help in my power. You know much of the Indians who are friendly to the French. How soon will they attack the place, do you think?"

"That White Buffalo cannot tell to his brother Washington," was the chief's answer. "They are eager for plunder and will hold off only so long as they think they are too weak to make the attack. But when they feel strong enough they will rush in, and if they take the fort, White Buffalo is sure the massacre at Fort William Henry will be repeated."

A few words more followed, and Washington hurried forth to notify several of his officers of what was happening at Fort Lawrence. A force of only thirty-six men could be spared from Fort Winchester, and these were placed under the command of Lieutenant Baldwick, an old Indian fighter. With the whites went nine Indians, who, after some little urging, consented to act under White Buffalo, although they belonged to a different tribe. Washington was greatly tempted to take command himself but felt that he would soon be needed in other directions.

The rangers chosen for this expedition were all on horseback, and Lieutenant Baldwick started them off just as soon as they could be gotten together, and the necessary food and ammunition could be distributed. The Indians were on foot, but they were all good runners, and as the trail was a rough one for horses the warriors kept up without great difficulty.

The expedition was yet within sight of Winchester when James Morris came riding into the post, having been on a business trip a mile further eastward. Dave's father met Colonel Washington at the entrance to the stockade and took the liberty to ask what the departure of the soldiers meant.

"They are on the way to Fort Lawrence," was

the answer, and Washington told of the message received and of what White Buffalo had had to relate.

"That's bad!" ejaculated James Morris. "Did he say anything of my folks, Colonel?"

"He mentioned your brother Joseph as being with Captain Tanner, but that is all. I sincerely trust your family are in the fort and safe," answered Washington.

Dave's father had wished to see the commander about the purchase of a number of horses needed by the British army, but now the business was forgotten, and without delay the trader dashed off on his steed after Lieutenant Baldwick's command. As soon as he gained the expedition he sought out White Buffalo and asked concerning Dave.

"He is at the fort," said the Indian. "And so is your brother Joseph and his wife and Rodney and little Bright-face,"—meaning Nell.

"And what of Henry?"

"He was missing—but he may be at the fort when we get there." And as well as he was able the warrior told of what had happened at Uriah Risley's cabin and afterwards.

Although the expedition moved on as rapidly as possible, it was high noon before half the distance to Fort Lawrence was covered. The mid-day meal was eaten on the march, and the only stop made was

one to water the horses. Two white scouts and two Indians went ahead as spies, and half an hour later discovered the camp of four Indians, who had with them one warrior who was suffering with a broken leg. A skirmish ensued, and two of the Indians, including the wounded man, were killed and the others taken prisoners. After that the expedition moved onward with greater vigilance than ever.

It was nearly three o'clock, and the soldiers were still a mile from the fort, when one of the advance guard set up a shout. He had caught sight of two white men creeping along the edge of a ravine to the north of the trail. A halt was ordered and another batch of scouts went forward to learn who the whites could be.

A short game of hide-and-seek now ensued, each side not knowing whether the other was a friend or an enemy. But at last there came a yell of joy from Sam Barringford as he swung his coon-skin cap in the air.

"I know you, Dick Hoggerly!" he shouted, to one of the scouts. "Don't let 'em shoot at us. I've got Henry Morris with me."

"Hullo, so it's you, Sam," was the answer. "All right; we ain't shootin' no friends if we kin help it." And then the word was passed around and soon the

two wanderers were made welcome, Henry especially so by his Uncle James.

The pair had but little to relate outside of what is already known. They told Lieutenant Baldwick that the Indians surrounded Fort Lawrence completely and that some sort of an attack had already taken place. This was enough to arouse the spirit of even the most sluggish, and once again the expedition moved through the forest, determined to save the fort and its defenders, if such a thing were possible.

## CHAPTER XIII

### FIGHTING OFF THE INDIANS

"It doesn't look much like an attack now."

It was Dave who spoke, as he leaned against the rocks and gazed sharply out into the forest, beyond the tiny stream of water flowing beside the improvised fort.

"When the redskins come they won't blow a trumpet," replied Rodney, grimly. "The more vicious the attack the more quiet they'll go about it. Isn't that so, father?"

"You're about right, my son," returned Joseph Morris. "I shouldn't be surprised if the Indians are much closer than we think."

"If only we knew where Henry is, and father," said Dave. "Perhaps the redskins have captured them both."

"They won't get your father so easily, Dave," came from Joseph Morris. "They may——"

The pioneer broke off short and suddenly raised his gun. He had seen some war-like feathers floating above a fringe of brushwood between a number

of stately walnut trees. He took careful aim and fired.

A yell rent the air and in a trice that cry was echoed by half a hundred others, filling the air with a sudden noise, which no pen can describe. As Dave said, it was truly "a hair raiser," and he felt a quick chill creep down his backbone. That yell told only too well how the Indians were aroused, and what they would do could they but gain the chance.

The report of Joseph Morris's gun was followed by the discharge of Rodney's weapon and then shots from several others. Rodney had seen a warrior running from one tree to another and had brought the Indian down midway between the two. But the fellow was only wounded and he lost no time in crawling to cover.

Spat! spat! A bullet and an arrow hit the rocks directly in front of the Morrises and caused Dave to dodge quickly, although so far there was small danger of being hit. Then came other shots from both sides and for several minutes the air inside and outside the fort was filled with smoke.

"There's a good number of them, that's certain," observed Joseph Morris, as he paused to reload. "I believe every Indian for a hundred and fifty miles around has gathered here. Hark!"

They listened, and from a distance came other yells, gradually circling around in the forest to the other side of the fort. But this ruse did not deceive those within.

"It's an old dodge," observed Joseph Morris. "They want us to look for them on that side while they make a dash on this. See, here they come now!"

"Yes, an' thar's fer 'em!" put in a pioneer standing near. His aim was true and a warrior went down just as he leaped out to cross the stream.

"Good for you, Pasney!" exclaimed Joseph Morris. "Never saw a truer shot in my life. You took him straight in the heart."

"Wall, thet's wot I reckoned on doin'," replied Pasney, coolly. He was an old trapper, and had lived among friendly Indians for years. At rifle practice he had often won prizes for marksmanship.

With four of their warriors either killed or wounded, the Indians retreated for the time being. So far nobody in the fort had been touched, consequently the spirits of all, even of the women folks, revived.

"If we keep this up, we'll soon discourage them," said Captain Tanner. "More than likely they'll hang around until to-morrow and then rush off to

loot what they can and get back to their own territory."

"If they do that we ought to follow them," said Dave. "They should be taught a good lesson. Just think of our nice home being burnt to the ground for no reason at all. It's a shame!"

Many of the women and children, as well as some of the men, were very tired, but sleep was out of the question for all old enough to comprehend what was taking place. Even little Nell came out of a nap with a scream and clung closer than ever to her mother's skirt.

"Oh, mamma, what will they do with us?" she asked. "Will they scalp us?"

"Let us hope not, dear," answered Mrs. Morris, soothingly. "I think your papa and the others can keep them off."

Half an hour later came another attack. It was now dark, and only a trained eye could see what was taking place in the blackness of the forest surrounding the fort. To get a better view Pasney climbed one of the trees forming part of the stockade.

Hardly had he gained a favorable position than he uttered a cry of alarm. Then came the whizzing of an arrow through the bare branches in front of him and his body came down with a thud just inside

the defence. Several rushed to him and raised him up, but it was too late.

"Shot through the heart!" whispered Dave, as he gazed on the body in horror. "He got just what he gave that redskin a while ago." And he turned away, scarcely able to control his feelings.

Again the warcry was given and once more the Indians made a rush, this time attacking the fort on two sides. There was a constant discharge of firearms, and arrows came freely into the enclosure, one taking Rodney through the fleshy part of the arm and another grazing Dave's face.

"You are hit, Rodney," cried Dave, as he saw his crippled cousin stagger back.

"Reckon it ain't much," was the answer. "But it was a close call," and then Rodney went to his mother, to have the wound bound up.

The fight had been waging for the best part of an hour when those in the fort saw that the enemy were changing their tactics. Through the air there rushed a dozen or more arrows all carrying with them trails of fire. They went up like so many rockets, to fall in graceful curves directly into the fort. One had a horn of powder attached to it, which, on touching the ground, exploded with great violence. Fire was scattered in all directions and

for the moment it looked as if some of the women folks and children would be burnt alive.

Rodney was close to his mother and little Nell when the first shower of burning arrows came down. He saw his mother's skirt go up into a blaze and like a flash tore the burning garment from her. Then he brushed some sparks from little Nell and himself and an old woman standing by.

"They intend to burn us alive!" was the cry, and many of the children began to scream louder than ever.

"Let the women take water and dirt and put out the fire!" ordered Captain Tanner. "Every man is needed at the stockade. They are getting ready for another rush!"

Fortunately all the water possible had been brought into the fort and clothes were soaked in this and used for beating out the flames. It was hard work, and soon the women were as smoke-begrimed as the men. To save the children all their dresses were wet down so that the sparks might have no effect. Where the burning arrows fell among the baggage, and water was not handy, the sod was dug up with spades and pike poles and thrown on as a blanket.

In the meantime what Captain Tanner had said

about another attack was true. But this time the Indians were more cautious and they hardly exposed themselves, while waiting for the fire to aid them. When they saw that the blazing arrows had little or no effect they fell back once more, with two warriors wounded, one mortally.

Slowly the night wore away. The loss to the pioneers had been one man killed and several wounded, although none seriously. One woman had been burnt across the neck and one little boy had had an ear scorched.

When day dawned the vigilance at the stockade and the rocks was not relaxed, for all felt that another attack might come at any moment. There was no water in the enclosure, all on hand having been used in fighting fire.

"We've got to get water somehow," said Joseph Morris. "I'm dying for a drink and I reckon all of you are about the same."

"Oh, Joseph, do not expose yourself," pleaded Mrs. Morris. "More than likely the Indians know we want water and they'll watch the brooks closely, to see if they can't catch whoever tries to get it."

This was proved to be the case a few minutes later, when a pioneer named Raymond tried to get a bucket of water. Hardly had he showed himself

when two arrows whizzed in that direction, one cutting through his coonskin cap. Raymond dropped his bucket in a hurry and lost no time in regaining shelter.

"I know a way to get water," said Rodney. "Dig a hole down between the rocks and then run a pike pole through that dirt bank. Some of the water in that brook will be sure to flow in this direction."

The suggestion was thought a good one and several started to dig the hole immediately. It was made four feet deep and the pike pole was jammed through the soil at as low a point as possible. At first no water came, but presently a few drops showed themselves and then followed a stream the size of one's little finger.

"Hurrah!" cried Dave. "Rodney's scheme is all right. That hole will keep the water here on a level with that in the stream and we'll have all we wish." And so it proved, much to the satisfaction of all in the fort. To be sure, the water was rather muddy, but even muddy water was much better than none and nobody complained.

"White Buffalo ought to be on his way back," observed Joseph Morris, as he and the boys sat on the rocks, eating the scant morning meal which Captain Tanner had had dealt out.

"Yes, and he ought to have some of Colonel Washington's rangers with him," returned Dave.

"Your father will be with 'em," came from Rodney. "That is, unless he struck out for the house instead."

The talking went on in low voices, for all ears were on guard, waiting for sounds from the forest. Captain Tanner had hoped to get some word from the Indians White Buffalo had left behind, but none of these showed themselves.

An hour later an alarm came from the farther end of the stockade. The Indians were gathering for a solid rush upon that quarter. Soon a yell was heard and again came shots and arrows.

"We are in for it now!" cried Captain Tanner. "Every man must do his duty or we are lost. They are coming on us a couple of hundred stronger!"

He was right, and now the enemy advanced boldly as if encouraged by the mere force of numbers. Several carried notched limbs of trees, to be used as ladders in scaling the stockade.

Shots flew thick and fast and inside of a few minutes two more of the pioneers were wounded and a woman was killed outright. The Indians suffered even a greater loss, but continued to come on until more than a score of them were close to the stockade. In the meantime several of the number ran

around to the rocks, thinking the pioneers had deserted this end of the fort.

Joseph Morris, Rodney, Dave, and two others met those at the rocks with a rapid volley which speedily put three of the warriors out of the contest. But more were coming, and in a few minutes our friends found themselves in what was almost a hand-to-hand encounter, only a few rough rocks separating them from the redskins.

Dave had just fired, and was reloading with all speed, when he saw an arrow aimed full at his uncle. He gave a shout of warning, but the cry came too late. Joseph Morris was struck in the breast and went down in a heap. He gave a strange little groan and then lay still.

## CHAPTER XIV

### RETREAT OF THE PIONEERS

Dave's shout of warning reached Rodney's ears, and the young man turned in time to see his father go down as just described. He gave a cry of horror and then, with set teeth, discharged his gun straight at the warrior who had laid Mr. Morris low. His aim was true and the Indian fell to rise no more.

The fall of his uncle nerved Dave to greater effort, and as the Indians rushed over the rocks he, with several others, met them in a short but bitter hand-to-hand contest, in which blows were freely taken and delivered. The redskins were yelling at the top of their lungs and using their tomahawks with great viciousness. Dave was confronted by a tall warrior who did his best to split the youth's head open with his hatchet, but Dave dodged and the blow merely grazed his shoulder. Then, before the Indian could aim another blow a bullet from the rear cut short the redskin's career forever.

The forest was now full of shouting, and shots were being fired with marvelous rapidity. Those

in the fort could not understand this. Had the Indians been re-enforced?

"If more redskins have come up we are doomed!" was the cry which went the rounds, but almost on top of it came a yell of joy:

"The rangers have come! We are saved!"

It was true, the command under Lieutenant Baldwick had come up after a long running fight with some Indians journeying toward the fort. These redskins had been put to flight and with them about a dozen French trappers and traders under Jean Bevoir, one of the trappers having been slain, along with two Indians. Now the rangers were fighting desperately to get to those hemmed in at the fort.

The coming of the soldiers put new life in the pioneers and the battle broke forth afresh. Struck at from both the front and the rear the Indians received a galling fire which filled them with sudden terror.

In the midst of the rangers were James Morris and Sam Barringford. Dave's father was cool and determined and every shot from his musket was sent with deadly effect. Barringford seemed to be in his element, and danced around so rapidly that not an Indian could draw a "bead" upon him.

"Thet for ye!" he yelled, firing his gun at the nearest warrior. "An' how do yer like thet, eh?"

—hitting a second with the butt of the weapon. "I'll show ye! Ain't I a roarin' painter when I'm cut loose! Cl'ar the track fer the bustin', roarin' whirlwind!" And thus shouting in the style peculiar to the old-time trappers of that period he rushed in, literally cutting a path over the rocks and into the fort proper. An arrow stuck through his coonskin cap and his hunting jacket was ripped in a dozen places by knives and tomahawks, yet with it all he seemed to bear a charmed life and laid low every warrior who dared to bar his progress.

In less than ten minutes after the rangers had appeared and closed in the Indians began to retreat. Seeing them thus on the run, the pioneers and soldiers increased their efforts and soon the warriors were only too glad to get back into the forest. They left the vicinity of the fort and took up their stand several hundred yards away, behind a small hill, enclosed on two sides by rocks. It is possible they expected the rangers to follow them to this point, but for the time being they were not molested.

The reason for this was easily explained. Both pioneers and rangers were utterly fagged out—the former by their hasty flights from their homes, and the vigilance and fighting at the fort, and the latter because of the forced ride from Winchester, and the first battle in the forest with Indians and French.

All needed a rest, and the wounded demanded attention. So for the time being the battle remained a drawn one.

As soon as it was made known that the Indians had retreated, a score of rangers who were unhurt were set to watch their movements, and then began the caring for the wounded. All told, it was found that six men, women and children had been killed outright and that one man was mortally hurt. Of the pioneers five were wounded, and of the rangers three, and of the killed two had been scalped.

"Dave, my son!" exclaimed James Morris, as he rushed up. "Are you safe?"

"Yes, father," was the answer. "And you?"

"I have a scratch on the leg, but it isn't much. How are the rest?"

"Uncle Joe has been shot down. I reckon the others are all right."

"Joe shot down? Is he—he——"

"There he is, over by the rocks. No, he isn't dead, but I think he's pretty bad. He got an arrow right in the breast."

Father and son hurried to the spot, to find Joseph Morris stretched out on a blanket and surrounded by all of his family, including Henry, who during the advance of the rangers had fought as bravely as anyone. The arrow had been extracted and Mrs.

Morris was using her utmost skill in binding up the wound.

"What do you think, James?" she wailed. "Will he live?"

"While there is life let us hope, Lucy," answered the brother-in-law, tenderly. "Is he unconscious?"

"Yes," put in Rodney. "I—I'm afraid that arrow point was poisoned."

"Let me see the arrow."

It was passed over and James Morris examined it with care. At this point Sam Barringford also came up and he, too, looked the arrow over.

"Ain't no p'ison thar," said the old frontiersman. "Thet tribe uses blue juice an' if thar war p'ison the blood would turn greenish. But it's rich red, as ye kin see. No, I allow as how he ain't p'isoned."

"I believe Sam tells the truth," said James Morris.

"But it's a fearful wound," said Dave. "I saw the arrow strike. It went in straight."

All set to work to revive the unconscious sufferer and Barringford insisted upon obtaining some liquor and forcing a few teaspoonsful down the wounded man's throat. At last they had the satisfaction of seeing Joseph Morris give a short gasp and open his eyes dreamily.

"Oh!" he murmured and for a moment was silent. "I—I am hit!" he went on.

"Be quiet, Joseph," said his wife, bending over him. "Yes, you were hit in the breast with an arrow. We will do what we can for you, but you mustn't move, or the wound will start to bleed again."

"But the Indians—"

"The Indians have retreated," said Rodney. "The rangers have come, and Uncle James is here, too, and so is Henry."

"All safe?"

"Yes."

"Thank God!" And then Joseph Morris relapsed once more into silence, being almost too weak to breathe much less to speak.

Little Nell had been crying bitterly, and now Henry took her in his arms and did his best to soothe her, for he knew his mother would not leave his father's side.

"The bad, bad Indians!" cried the little girl. "Oh, how could they come and shoot at us! And last night they tried to burn us up with their fire arrows! Oh, it was dreadful!" And she buried her curly head in her brother's shoulder.

The hours to follow were gloomy enough, and ones which those in the stockade never forgot. The

man who had been mortally wounded died shrieking with pain, and the sounds rang in the ears of both young and old, filling the latter with new grief. The dead were buried together in one deep hole and over their last resting place were rolled several heavy stones, that no wild beasts might disturb their common grave. The service at this funeral was short, for there was no telling when the Indians might make another attack.

Toward the middle of the afternoon word come in through the friendly Indians under White Buffalo that the French Indians, as they were called, were preparing for some new move. Instantly every available man in the fort leaped for his gun and even some of the women armed themselves, determined to fight to the last rather than risk the horrors of becoming captives of the enemy.

But the alarm proved a false one, for the Indians, although they shifted their camp to the opposite side of the fort, did nothing but exchange a few shots with several of the rangers. Yet this move kept the pioneers on the alert all night, so that little or no sleep was had by anyone.

"I must say I'm so tired I can scarcely keep my eyes open," said Henry to Dave. "If we elect to retreat I don't see how I'm going to either ride or walk."

"Take a nap," said Dave. "If another alarm comes I'll call you." And Henry dropped down and was in the land of dreams almost on the instant.

On the following morning a council of war was held by Captain Tanner, Lieutenant Baldwick and half a dozen of the leading pioneers, and it was decided that the best thing to do would be to retreat to Winchester. Provisions were getting low and so was ammunition, and the lieutenant had been ordered not to hold Fort Lawrence, but do his best to bring in the settlers and families in safety.

"The Indians are gathering steadily," said Lieutenant Baldwick. "Every hour makes them stronger. I think the sooner we strike out the better it will be for us." And in this Captain Tanner and the majority of the settlers agreed.

The main difficulty which presented itself was how to care for the wounded. It would be running a grave risk to move Joseph Morris and several others, but there was no help for it, and the family were told to prepare for leaving in an hour.

"We will make a litter between two horses," said James Morris. "Rodney can ride on one of the animals and lead them along the smoothest part of the trail he can find. We will bind the wound as tightly as possible, so that the blood won't get much chance to start afresh."

Mrs. Morris wished to demur, fearing her husband might die ere the journey was completed. But she could not remain behind alone, and so, with a sinking heart, she prepared to move as had been ordered.

The settlers were cautioned to leave the fort as silently as possible and to carry along only that which was absolutely necessary. Before they left the rangers and some of the Indians under White Buffalo went ahead, to make sure that the trail chosen by Captain Tanner was clear. Eight of the rangers remained at the fort, to give it the appearance of still being inhabited and, in case of attack, to rush out and cover the settlers' rear.

## CHAPTER XV

### DISAPPEARANCE OF LITTLE NELL

As was natural Dave and Henry journeyed side by side. They moved directly behind Mrs. Morris and little Nell, who brought up in the rear of the litter on which Joseph Morris rested, and the horses under the control of Rodney. Dave's father was not with the party, nor was trusty Sam Barringford, both having joined the party of rangers who formed the advance guard.

Following the instructions given them the pioneers and their families moved through the great forest as silently as possible, only the occasional groan of a wounded one, or the cry of some little child breaking the stillness. The route was past the rocks bordering one of the water-courses previously mentioned and then along what in those days was called the Old Buffalo Trail,—a well-beaten path along which in years gone by countless buffaloes had passed in their migrations to the east and return. The buffaloes were now fast disappearing from this territory, as are to-day the deer, wolves, and other wild animals which were likewise numerous.

It was a trying time, for the ears of all were ever on the alert to catch the first sign of an approaching enemy. Onward went Dave and Henry with their guns ready for instant use. Rodney guided the horses with the greatest of care, yet there were many jolts to the litter which more than once caused Joseph Morris to utter a groan he could not suppress.

It was calculated that if nothing out of the ordinary occurred the party would be able to reach Winchester in three days, but if the Indians followed them up and attacked them the journey would take much longer, for they would have to make a stand behind whatever breastworks they could manage to erect, and there remain until the coast was clear or the enemy drove them forth. There was also the ever-present possibility that the Indians would wipe out the expedition entirely, a possibility that made many of the married men shudder, as they thought of their wives and defenseless children.

"We can consider ourselves lucky if we reach Winchester without any more hair-raising," observed Henry, as they trudged along.

"Right you are," replied Dave. "The Indians seem worked up to the last degree. They'll trap us if they possibly can."

"There is one thing in our favor, Dave. Captain

Tanner is as good a scout as you'll find in these parts, and with such men with him as Barringford and your father he won't fall into any trap unless it's a mighty slick one."

"To think that Jean Bevoir should be in this neighborhood with his thieving traders," went on Dave, after a pause. "I declare I wish he had fallen instead of one of those Indians we brought down. He isn't as good as some of the Iroquois, to my way of thinking."

"He'll get what he deserves one of these days, Dave. He has cheated so many redskins that some of them will lay for him some night, and that will be the end of him and his band. But I must admit, I can't understand how any redskins can follow the leadership of such a rascal, who gives them liquor only in order to rob them of their hard-earned pelts."

Two miles had been covered when there came a shot from the front, followed by three others. Immediately the pioneers and their families gathered behind a semi-circle of rocks and brush which happened to be near. Several Indians had shown themselves to the scouts, but as soon as one was shot the others fled. The whole party remained on guard half an hour longer, but none of the enemy returned, and the onward march was resumed.

Late that night Dave heard that two more white men had joined the expedition and not long after this he caught sight of Uriah Risley. He ran up to meet the Englishman, and Henry did the same.

"My wife, where is she?" asked Uriah Risley, of Henry. "Tell me quickly!"

"I can't tell you," answered Henry.

"But you were with her—so Dave told me."

"I was with her. But some Indians came and attacked us, and I told her to run and hide in the woods. Then the Indians came at me and I was struck down, and that was all I knew until long afterward when I found myself strapped to the back of a horse and traveling with a band of redskins." And Henry gave the particulars of the encounter, and of how Sam Barringford had afterward come to his rescue.

"Do you think my wife got away into the woods?"

"I really can't say. I know she ran off as well as her hurt ankle would let her, but it may be that some of the Indians went after her. I had my hands so full I couldn't look," concluded Henry.

Uriah Risley was pale and haggard and said he had not slept for two nights, nor had he had a regular meal for forty-eight hours. He had been to the vicinity of his burnt cabin and had followed

up Henry's trail as best he could for several miles, but nowhere had he found a trace of his wife.

"I fear she is either dead or in the hands of those murderous redskins," he groaned, his eyes growing suspiciously moist. "Poor dear Caddy! She never could get used to this life either! It was a sorry day when we didn't remain in England, or in Annapolis." And he turned away to hide his emotion. Several came and offered him food and a portion of this he ate mechanically. Sleep, although he needed it badly, was out of the question.

Strange to say no Indian attack occurred during the following day, and that night found the expedition well on its way to Winchester. Some of the pioneers were of the opinion that the enemy had retreated westward, satisfied with the damage done and the booty obtained, but at this Sam Barringford, Captain Tanner, and a number of other old frontiersmen shook their heads.

"The Injun's at his worst when he's layin' low," was the way Barringford expressed himself. "We've got to keep our eyes peeled or fust thing you know we'll all wake up skulped."

Fortunately for the party one of the advance guard had brought down a deer and another had bagged a number of birds with some fine shot. The birds were made into a stew for the sick and

wounded and the venison was cut up and divided all around. The expedition was in the midst of a wide timber belt, at a spot where there was a small clearing. Here, in a hollow, a camp-fire was lit and the meat cooked and stew made, and while one half of the able-bodied pioneers and soldiers remained on guard the other half had their first full meal since leaving the fort. Then the guard was changed and the other half satisfied the cravings of the inner man, after which sentinels were posted and the camp settled down to see if it could not obtain a much-needed night's rest.

Mrs. Morris and the others were gratified to see that while Joseph Morris's wound pained him not a little it did not break out afresh and gave every promise of healing rapidly when once the sufferer should reach a place where he could have a couple of weeks' quiet. Before retiring with little Nell the wife washed and re-bound the wound and gave her husband all the nourishment he cared to take.

Dave was on guard during the first half of the night, with his father on the next post not a hundred feet away. The night was dark and a low wind was rising which betokened a storm. All else was quiet and the camp-fire was allowed to burn low until only a few embers were left.

"It looks as if the Indians had really given it up," said Dave, as he and his father met on their walks up and down the two posts.

"Don't be too sure," answered James Morris. "At this very minute they may be preparing to rush in and overwhelm us. I won't believe we are safe until we come in sight of Winchester."

"Is the fort there in good shape?"

"Fairly good, although Colonel Washington is going to strengthen it all he can. The trouble is, Washington is having trouble with Governor Dinwiddie. The governor thinks he knows it all and won't give the colonel half the soldiers or equipments that are needed. He doesn't seem to realize that if Winchester should fall all the English settlers would be driven back over the Blue Ridge and would lose everything they possess in this locality."

When it came time to turn in Dave was glad enough to throw himself down and go to sleep, with nothing more than a thin blanket to cover him. His father lay beside him, with Joseph Morris, Mrs. Morris and Rodney and little Nell not far off.

How long he slept Dave did not know, but when he awoke it was with a start and a cough. There was a fierce shouting and shooting going on and the forest seemed full of smoke and fire.

Hardly had he gained his feet when an arrow whizzed past his head burying itself in the tree trunk behind him.

"The attack is on!" came from James Morris, who was already up. "They have fired the woods on two sides of the camp and they are laying for us on the other two sides. I'm afraid it is going to be a fight to the finish."

There was no time to say more for the confusion on every hand was great. The shouting and shooting continued, and in the midst of this Captain Tanner ran around, followed by Lieutenant Baldwick, giving orders to the men and advising the women and children what to do. To the uproar was added the mad prancing around of some of the horses, who sniffed the smoke, and the screams of the frightened children, some clinging to the skirts of their mothers and others running about looking for their parents, who had become lost to them in the general mix-up.

"Stay with your aunt and uncle, Dave," said James Morris. "They'll need you. I'll go out with the soldiers," and in a second he was bounding away, to learn how bad the situation really was, and what might be done to remedy it.

What happened during the next hour seemed to the boy, afterward, more like some horrible dream

than a reality. The war-whoops of the Indians continued to ring out on the night air, punctuated by numerous shots and yells from the wounded, while the fire in the forest grew brighter and brighter, driving the sick, wounded, and the helpless before it. Rodney and the others tried to get Joseph Morris back on the litter, but before this could be done both horses bolted away in the darkness, one upsetting Mrs. Morris and bruising her shoulder severely. Then Henry and Dave locked hands chair-fashion and started to carry the sufferer between them, only to stumble over some tree roots and go sprawling headlong. In the meantime Mrs. Morris looked around her, to discover that little Nell was missing.

"Nell! Nell!" she screamed. "Come here! Nell!"

"Isn't she with you, mother?" came quickly from Rodney.

"No. But she was here a moment ago. Nell! Nell!"

No answer came back to this cry, and now both Mrs. Morris and Rodney ran hither and thither in search of the little girl. Little could be seen, for the smoke was so thick it fairly blinded them.

As quickly as possible Dave and Henry arose and picked up Mr. Morris. The fall had hurt the

sufferer's wound and he had to groan in spite of his efforts to choke back the sounds.

"Never—mind m-m—me!" he gasped. "Sa—save th—the others!" And then he fainted dead away.

"Your mother is calling for Nell!" cried Dave. "Here, Henry, put him on my back. I'll carry him somehow, and then you can go back to her." And after an effort Dave mastered his load and staggered on, in the direction already taken by a number of others. He was now more careful where he placed his feet and thus kept from going down again, although the load made him pant and exert himself far beyond his youthful strength. On and on he went, over rocks and tearing through low brushwood. An arrow went by his shoulder but he paid no attention. He heard more shots, and once a blaze of fire seemed to flash up almost in front of him. But he was not struck, and ten minutes later he felt that he had in some marvelous manner left the battle-ground behind him. He plunged into a hollow filled with wet grass and went down up to his knees. Unable to carry his load further he allowed his uncle's body to slip down beside him, and there he rested, trying his best to get back his breath and wondering what would happen next.

## CHAPTER XVI

### BACK TO WINCHESTER

At last the battle seemed to be at an end. Only a few shots sounded out and they came from a distance. The fire in the forest had died down and, thanks to an all-powerful Providence it had failed to give the Indians the success they had sought. It was true a number of the pioneers and soldiers had been badly wounded, but none were killed, while on the other hand seven redskins had been laid low.

All was in a hopeless confusion, and it was not until daylight came that Captain Tanner and the others succeeded in straightening matters out. Many of the women and children had fled into the forest and these had to be hunted up, while some of the pioneers had followed the enemy on their private account and did not return until they felt the Indians were sufficiently beaten back.

When Dave recovered from his forced traveling his first anxiety was for his uncle, who had fainted away from a fresh loss of blood. As well as he was able, the youth bound up the wound once more, tearing off a sleeve of his shirt for that purpose.

While he was at work several alarms sounded close to him, and he held his breath, expecting to be discovered at any instant. But the Indians passed him on both sides with a speed that showed him they were now thinking only of retreat.

With the first streak of daylight he looked around him and at a distance discovered two rangers on horseback. They were rounding up the pioneers and their families and they readily consented to assist him all in their power.

"Reckon Mr. Morris is in a pretty bad way," said one of the soldiers. "The knocking around didn't do his wound no good."

"That's just the trouble," answered Dave. "But I did the best I could under the circumstances. I didn't want the Indians to scalp him."

"Oh, you did mighty well, lad—mighty well. Come, I'll take him up on my hoss."

The ranger carried the helpless man with care and soon Dave and his uncle reached the spot to which all the pioneers were coming. As soon as she caught sight of them, Mrs. Morris came running forward.

"Oh, Dave, how is he?" she questioned.

"Not any better, Aunt Lucy," he responded, soberly. "I think you'll have to keep him very quiet after this."

"Did you see anything of Nell?"

"No. Is she gone?"

"Yes. Henry and your father are out looking for her."

"It's too bad! I hope they find her soon."

Dave felt very weak and gladly partook of some soup which several of the women in the camp had made.

The youth was just finishing the repast when his father and Henry came back, looking much disheartened.

"Did she come back?" questioned both, and then as Mrs. Morris shook her head, not daring to trust herself to speak, James Morris continued: "It's too bad! I can't believe it possible that the Indians carried her off."

"Yes! yes! They must have carried her off!" sobbed Mrs. Morris. "My poor darling Nell! Oh, what will those wretches do with her!" And she burst into a flood of tears.

Rodney had just come up, and all turned in to console her as best they could. Yet they could say but little to soothe her sorely wounded heart. Even Dave found the tears standing in his eyes, for he loved little Nell as much as if she were his own sister.

When it came time to count those who had been

in the expedition it was found that two other girls besides little Nell were missing—twins named Mary and Bertha Rose, the children of a pioneer who lived fifteen miles to the north of the Morris homestead. Mrs. Rose was as grief-stricken as Mrs. Morris, and both wept together when they met.

"I shall remain behind to see if I can't find some trace of all the children," said James Morris.

"And I'll do the same," said Nelson Rose. "I would rather give up my life than leave my two girls in the Indians' power."

"Reckon as how I'll stay behind with ye," put in Sam Barringford. Although he never admitted it, little Nell was very dear to the old frontiersman's heart.

"White Buffalo will also look for little Bright-face," said the Indian chief. "But he is much afraid the French Indians have carried all three of the maidens off."

So it was decided, and when the expedition moved off the three white men and the Indian with his followers were left behind. Captain Tanner and Lieutenant Baldwick were now pretty certain that the Indians would not make another attack in a hurry, and this was why he readily consented to

spare them. Although he said nothing, Uriah Risley also remained behind, to see if he could not learn something concerning his wife.

Owing to the condition of the wounded the onward march to Winchester was now slower than ever, and when night came only half the distance to that frontier town had been covered. But a messenger had been sent ahead and now several wagons came out to carry in the disabled on the following day. This made the remainder of the journey less of a hardship for Joseph Morris, and while he did not improve neither did he seem to grow worse.

The news of the massacre, as it was called, had spread in all directions, and when the pioneers reached Winchester they found the post alive with many others who had come in from all points of the compass, some with all of their belongings and others with nothing but the clothing on their backs. As a consequence every cabin and house was filled to overflowing, and it was only by good luck that the Morrises obtained shelter at the cabin of an intimate friend named Maurice Gibson. Gibson himself was a trader like James Morris, and his wife Abigail and Mrs. Lucy Morris had been old schoolmates.

Joseph Morris was placed on a comfortable bed

and without delay a surgeon was called to attend him. The medical man probed his wound and had it thoroughly washed, and then left a strong tonic as a medicine.

"I think he will recover before long," said the doctor. "But he must remain quiet until the wound is thoroughly healed. If not fever may set in and then I will not be responsible for the consequences."

"He shall remain here as long as he pleases," said Maurice Gibson. "And his family also;" and so it was settled.

Of course Mrs. Morris felt relieved to think that her husband would recover, but she could not forget her little daughter, and as she thought of Nell in the hands of the Indians the silent tears would course down her cheeks in spite of all she could do to stay them.

"It is awful, awful!" she said to Dave. "Oh, I would give my right hand to know that she was safe!"

"I'd give a good deal myself, Aunt Lucy," he returned. "But keep up your courage. Father, and Barringford, and White Buffalo will do all in their power to bring her back to us."

Two days of anxiety passed in the town and then it was reported that the majority of the hostile In-

dians had retreated in the direction of Fort Duquesne, to join the French located at that stronghold. Some of the regulars had followed a portion of the enemy and brought down three braves at what was called Three Posts. Among these Indians thus laid low was Crooked Nose, a half brother to Spotted Tail, a celebrated chief of that time.

"And still no trace of Nell," sighed Mrs. Morris, when the news came in. "Dave, did you hear anything of your father?"

"Not a word, Aunt Lucy."

"I hope he is safe."

"Oh, you can trust him to take care of himself —especially when Barringford and White Buffalo are with him. I think they'll bring us some certain news when they return."

But none of the party did return, and at the end of a week even Dave grew anxious. By this time Joseph Morris felt strong enough to do a little talking although he was not allowed to move further than was absolutely necessary.

Even though there were no telegraph lines in those days, it did not take the news long to travel throughout the length and breadth of Virginia and her neighboring states, and it was felt on all sides

that that whole territory would not be safe from Indian and French raids so long as Fort Duquesne remained in the hands of the French.

"Give me the authority and men to march against that fort and take possession and our frontier will be at peace," wrote Colonel Washington. "But the longer we delay the more dangerous will this situation become to us." These are not his exact words but they are the gist of numerous communications which he addressed to those in authority over him.

Two weeks later James Morris came in, pale and careworn, having traveled a distance of several hundred miles in half a dozen directions, on a hunt for little Nell and the Rose twins.

"We found traces of them, but that is all," he said. "They are undoubtedly in the hands of the Indians, who are taking them either to Fort Duquesne or else northward to Lake Erie. I left Mr. Rose, Barringford and the Indians still looking for them. I was anxious to learn how it was going with brother Joseph and the rest of you."

"But you will go back—you won't give up the hunt so soon?" pleaded Mrs. Morris.

"Yes, I will go out again," answered Dave's father. "Just as soon as I can have one square meal and one good night's sleep."

The meal was speedily forthcoming, and the trader went to bed at seven that evening and did not awaken until noon of the next day. Then he declared that he felt as if he had been made new all over, and two hours later, bidding the others good-bye, set off to continue his search. It was a long while before Dave saw his father again.

## CHAPTER XVII

### A NEW CAMPAIGN

As already told, affairs in the colonies looked blue indeed, and some hardy pioneers who had risked their all in making their homes in this new country were afraid that ere long they would be forced to either give in to the Indians or come under French rule. Three campaigns had been fought, and still the French were masters, and held Louisburg, Crown Point, Ticonderoga, Frontenac, and the long chain of posts from Niagara to the Ohio and thence to the Mississippi. The English fort at Oswego had been destroyed and the French had compelled the Six Nations, the most powerful Indian organization ever known, either to remain neutral or else give them aid.

To add to English alarm, the war in Europe also took a turn in favor of the French. This brought a storm of protests upon the English ministry, and George II. was compelled to make a change. As a consequence William Pitt was placed in entire control of foreign and colonial affairs.

Pitt was a man of both wisdom and action, and his plans for a new campaign in America aroused the colonies as they had not been aroused before. An army of fifty thousand men, English regulars and colonial militia, was gathered, and it was resolved that a three-headed campaign should be instituted at once, one against Louisburg, another against Ticonderoga and a third against Fort Duquesne.

The first blow was struck early in June, 1758, when the English appeared before Louisburg with thirty-eight ships of war and an army of fourteen thousand men. There was a vigorous attack, and something of a siege, and late in July the place capitulated, and this fall also included the capture of the islands of Prince Edward and Cape Breton.

The advance upon Ticonderoga was not so successful, although a portion of the troops under gallant Israel Putnam, afterwards so famous in the Revolution, dispersed some of the French and captured a hundred and forty-eight prisoners. Following this, an attack was made upon Fort Frontenac, located where the city of Kingston, Canada, is now situated, and here the English laid the fort in ruins and captured nine vessels carrying guns and supplies.

The people of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsyl-

vania were anxious that the attack on Fort Duquesne be made at once, but as we already know, the armies, especially such as had to march through the wilderness, moved very slowly. The command of this expedition was placed in the hands of General Forbes, a gallant officer but one who was far from being in proper health for such an undertaking. This general left Philadelphia early in July with the main portion of his command, and after a hard march reached Raytown, ninety miles eastward of Fort Duquesne, and now known as Bedford.

While General Forbes was thus moving westward Colonel Washington, who had been ordered to join the main command, gathered together all his available troops and moved northward from Winchester to Fort Cumberland, called in these pages by its, then, common name of Will's Creek.

The spring had passed slowly to those of the Morris family located at Winchester. Strange to say although Joseph Morris' wound healed it seemed next to impossible for the pioneer to get back his strength, and the most he could do was to walk around the rooms of the Gibson home, or around the dooryard, supported by his wife or others.

"My legs won't support me," he said. "They feel as if they'd let me down in a heap at any minute."

"It is the effects of the fever," said Mrs. Morris. "The doctor says you will have to take it easy for several months."

Rodney, too, had suffered from the march through the forest and from the fighting and was confined more or less to the house.

"It's a shame—and just after I thought I was getting so strong," sighed the cripple. "Somehow, we seem to be an ill-fated family."

During all those dreary months no direct word had come to them concerning little Nell, but through White Buffalo had come a report that a certain tribe of Indians known as the Little Waters had several white girls in their keeping and that one old Indian chief had taken one of the captives as his daughter, he being childless.

"If they take 'em in as their children they'll treat 'em putty civil-like," said Sam Barringford. "But I reckon you don't want to lose little Nell even so."

"No! no!" said Mrs. Morris. "Oh, we must get her back somehow!"

After this news was brought in, Barringford and Dave's father went north-westward once more, in the hope of opening negotiations with the Indians. How this trip would turn out was still a question, although White Buffalo declared that little could

be done so long as the war hatchet remained unburied between the English and the French Indians.

As soon as the new call came for additional troops to the colonial militia, Dave signified his intention of once more entering the service under his old commander, Colonel Washington. About this he did not hesitate to see Washington personally.

"I'll be glad to have you with us," said Washington, after the youth had explained matters. "I remember how you acted in our other campaign against Fort Duquesne, and I haven't forgotten, Master David, how we shot the bear,"—this with a twinkle in his eye. "Yes, join us by all means if you care to do so." And Dave signed the muster roll that day,—as a colonial militiaman, at a salary of tenpence a day, twopence to be deducted for clothing and other necessaries! This was the regular rate of pay, and for those days was considered quite fair.

It must be confessed that the troops under Colonel Washington formed a motley collection. Many of the best of the pioneers and frontiersmen had grown tired of the delays in the past and now refused to reenlist, fearful that they would be called on to do nothing but wait around the fort, while the summer harvests at home demanded their attention. Drumming up recruits proved the hardest kind of work, and

the companies were made up in some cases of men who knew not the meaning of home life—hardy trappers and traders, some industrious enough, but others given to drink and brawling, and not a few who lived almost as the Indians did, using the redmen's style of dress and occasionally painting their faces, "jes' fer the sport on't," as they expressed it. When it came to fighting these men were like human tigers, but in camp and on the march it was next to impossible to bring them under military discipline. Many refused to carry rations as the regular soldiers did, preferring to bring down game as they needed it, and if game was not handy they appropriated a pig or a cow belonging to some settler—thus bringing additional trouble on the command.

"So you are going with the soldiers," said Henry, when Dave told him of what he had done. "Well, if you go I shall go too—that is, if mother will let me."

Henry put in the proviso with an anxious look on his face, for he knew how difficult would be his task of getting his parent's consent.

"No, no, Henry!" cried Mrs. Morris. "With your father and Rodney so ill, and with Nell gone, how can I spare you?"

"But, mother, somebody has got to fight the

French," insisted the son. "If we don't fight them, and whip them, how shall we ever get back to our home? I don't want to give all that up, do you?"

A long argument followed, and at last Mrs. Morris said she would let her son know about it in the morning.

White Buffalo came in that night with news. "The Little Waters have gone to the setting sun, to the French," he said. "White Buffalo has been told they will remain there until winter comes again."

"To Fort Duquesne!" cried Dave. "I'm glad of it. Now if we take that fort perhaps we'll be able to rescue Nell and the Rose twins."

This news decided Mrs. Morris, and with tears standing in her eyes she told Henry he might go with Dave and Colonel Washington. "And may God grant that you return with Nell safe and sound," she added.

A few days later found the two young soldiers on the march. It was something of a gala day for Winchester, and the post was gay with flags and bunting. The long drums rolled and the fifes piped up cheerily as the command passed out of the town and on the trail running northward to Cumberland. Many were in the best of spirits, hoping that the downfall of Fort Duquesne would be speedily accomplished.

The town was scarcely left behind however, before

the music came to an end, and the command moved on by the route step—that is, every soldier stepping out to suit himself. This was necessary, for the way was rough, having fallen into disuse since the beginning of the troubles with the Indians.

"I heard a report that we are not to use the old Braddock road to Fort Duquesne," said Henry, as he trudged alongside of Dave. "Colonel Washington advised using it, but General Forbes is going to cut a road of his own."

"If he does that we'll be all fall and winter getting to the fort," answered Dave. "How foolish not to use a road already made."

"It's queer they won't take Colonel's Washington's advice. He knows this territory better than anybody."

"There is a good deal of military jealousy afloat," was the answer. "English officers hate to see a colonial get ahead of them. They want to head the whole game."

The second night out the troops encamped near a large brook. It was hot and Dave and Henry were glad enough to take a swim in the stream as soon as they got the chance. They were soon in the water and diving and sporting to their heart's content. Then Henry caught a branch hanging over the water's edge and pulled himself up into the tree.

"See what a fine dive I can take from here," he called to his cousin.

"Don't you do it," cried Dave. "You may go too deep and strike your head on a rock."

"I'll be careful," was Henry's answer: "Here goes!"

With a quick movement he leaped from one limb to another. As the second limb gave a sudden swish Henry uttered a cry of alarm. Then he came tumbling into the water with a loud splash. After him tumbled a wildcat, snarling in rage at being thus unceremoniously disturbed. The wildcat struck close to where Dave was treading water and on the instant made a leap for the young soldier's shoulder.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### WILDCAT AND WATER

DAVE was both startled and alarmed when the wildcat came down almost on top of his bare head, and even more frightened when the beast made a leap for his naked shoulder. He had had several experiences with wildcats and knew them to be both powerful and bloodthirsty.

By instinct more than reason he dived and went down as far as possible. As soon as the water closed over the wildcat's head it let go its hold and began to swim for the shore.

Henry was directly in the path of the beast and in a second more, ere the young soldier had time to think of diving, the wildcat was on his back, sinking its cruel nails deeply into his flesh.

"Get off!" screamed Henry. "Get off! Help! help!"

And then he went down, not because he thought of doing so, but because he could not bear the weight. The stream closed over him and he went directly to the bottom.

This time the wildcat did not let go its hold. It clung desperately and when Henry tried to shake it off it only sunk its nails deeper into his flesh. Mechanically he started to scream, when the water rushed into his mouth, almost strangling him on the spot.

By this time Dave had reached the surface, and the rings and bubbles showed him plainly where Henry and the wildcat had gone down. With swift strokes he swam to the river bank, just as several rangers came running to the scene.

"Did you call for help?" asked one.

"A wildcat!" panted Dave, hardly able to speak, and he pointed out into the stream. "Sa—save my cousin!"

"So a cat has attacked him, eh?" said one of the rangers. He raised his gun. "Don't see anything of the critter."

Just as he finished speaking there was a splash in the water and the head of the wildcat appeared. Then up came Henry, and they saw that the beast still clung to the young hunter's back.

It was a risky shot to take, for youth and beast floundered around furiously. But something had to be done, and in a second one gun-shot rang out, followed quickly by another. The aims of both rangers had been true, and the wildcat was struck

in the forequarter and in the head. With a snarl and a sputter it let go its hold of Henry and splashed madly around in the water.

No cry came from Henry, but as soon as the beast had let go its hold he sank beneath the surface once more, too weak to do anything toward saving himself.

"He'll be drowned!" muttered Dave. "Save him!" And without waiting he plunged in the river once more.

He felt deathly weak himself, but the thought that his cousin might be lost forever nerved him on. With set teeth he swam to the spot. Catching sight of Henry's arm as it was thrown up, he grabbed at the member and clung fast.

"Henry, hold to me," he managed to say, but his cousin paid no attention, for he was more than half insensible. Then Dave tried to raise him up, but the weight was more than he could sustain.

"Help us, somebody!" the young hunter managed to call out, and there followed a splash, as one of the rangers leaped into the river. Another shot rang out, a finishing one for the wildcat, and the carcass of the beast floated down the river and out of sight among the bushes lining the opposite bank.

By the time the ranger came up, Dave was nearly as far gone as Henry. The old soldier was a power-

ful fellow and easily brought both to the bank, which was only a short distance off. Here Dave sank down in a heap, while the other soldiers did what they could to revive Henry.

The report that a wildcat had attacked some bathers quickly spread throughout the camp and many flocked in that direction to learn the particulars. Both Dave and Henry were given the best of attention, and by the following morning each said he was able to resume his duties. But both were stiff from the treatment received from the wild beast and on Henry's neck were deep scratches which he was destined to carry with him to the grave.

"After this I'm going to be mighty particular where I bathe," he said to Dave, when on the march.

"Yes, and particular where you dive from," returned Dave. "If you see another wildcat on your spring-board better let him finish his nap without disturbing him."

The march to Cumberland was more difficult than had been anticipated, and the young soldiers were glad when it came to an end and they found themselves encamped just outside of the fort, which both had visited more than once when on a trip to Will's Creek. Soldiers were coming in from all directions, and soon the camp was full to overflowing.

"Wonder how long we'll stay here," said Henry, after they had been at Cumberland over a week. "I had an idea we were to march straight on to Fort Duquesne."

"There is some trouble over that new road to the fort," answered Dave. "I understand Colonel Washington is awfully cut up over it. He thinks they ought to use the old Braddock road and polish up the Frenchmen in short order."

"It was the delay that brought on defeat before, that's certain, Dave. It's a pity the British generals won't take Washington's advice."

What Dave said about trouble over the road was true. The Braddock road, originally selected by the Indians, was as good as any to be had or made, yet despite all arguments against it, it was decided to cut a new road through to Fort Duquesne from Raytown. It was true such a road would be a little shorter than the old road, but to cut it would take all summer and to keep up the campaign during the winter would be well-nigh out of the question.

When a part of the colonial troops, including the company to which Dave and Henry were attached, reached Raytown they found the new road already started, with two hundred men engaged in cutting down trees, removing big stones, and burning brushwood. This was kept up week after week, and

in the meantime the troops suffered greatly through sickness and lack of proper food. Many of the colonials grew disgusted at the slow progress of the campaign and would have gone home had not the military regulations forbidden it.

It was in the midst of this that Sam Barringford came in and hunted up Henry and Dave. "Thought you'd like to set eyes on me," he said, on shaking hands. "Jes' got in with Dave's father. We did some tall hunting I kin tell ye."

"And Nell?" asked Henry, quickly.

"She's a prisoner up to Fort Duquesne. We got thet putty straight."

"Not of the French?"

"No, of the Injuns hangin' around thar—the Jean Bevoir crowd, as Dave's father calls 'em—a bad lot, too."

Barringford had decided to take part in the campaign now in progress and it can well be imagined that the two young soldiers were right glad to have their trusty old friend with them once more.

"It will seem like old times," said Dave. "If only we could move ahead to-morrow!"

It was late in October when Dave brought in news. He rushed up to where Henry and Barringford were industriously sewing up some holes in their jackets.

"Hurrah, we are to move at last!" he cried. "Major Grant is ordered ahead with eight hundred men, and our company is to go with the body."

"Only eight hundred," returned Barringford. "Thet ain't many. Kind o' a scoutin' party, I reckon."

Yet, he too was glad to make a movement of any kind, and prepared at once for the departure. Two days later the command was on the road, those left behind wishing them the best of success.

The English were still many miles from Fort Duquesne when the French scouts brought word to their commander that the enemy were approaching. Without waiting to be attacked the French marched forth to do the approaching English battle.

"The fight is on!" cried Dave, as several shots rang out from in front. "We are in for it now!"

"Well, we came to fight," answered Henry. "And the sooner the battle is over the better."

The real battle, however, did not take place until the next day. Then the French did their best to surround the English, and in a short while the contest waxed hot on all sides. Part of the battleground was a small opening and the rest of the fighting took place in the forest. Soon the smoke became so thick that but little could be seen on either side.

"Tell ye wot, them Frenchers mean business!"

ejaculated Barringford, while re-loading his fire-arm, which was so hot he could scarcely hold it. "We've lost a sight o' men already."

What he said was true. The loss had been frightful, and the dead and dying lay on every side. Moans and shrieks rent the air, in a fashion to turn the stoutest heart sick. Major Grant rushed around heedless of danger, giving directions and doing all he could to encourage those under him.

"Don't retreat! The battle is ours!" he called out. "Stand where you are!" And then his voice was lost in the rattle of musketry and the mad yelling of the Indians, who had come up to aid the French and steal what they could from the English.

Dave, Henry and Barringford were behind a fallen tree, blazing away as rapidly as possible. The French were before them and the Indians on their left, and for some time it was as if pandemonium had broken loose. Suddenly Barringford gave a yell.

"Duck, boys, duck!"

They fell flat and not a second too soon, for half a dozen arrows whizzed over their heads. Then the old frontiersman leaped to his feet.

"I'll pay ye back!" he roared. "That fer ye, ye sarpints o' the Evil One!"

He took a quick but careful aim at the leader of

He took a quick but careful aim at the leader. — *Page 168.*

the Indians, who was rushing straight forward, with tomahawk lifted. The hammer of his flint-lock musket fell. A terrific explosion followed and Barringford was hurled flat while Dave and Henry were also struck and knocked down. The gun had exploded.

Then before any of the party could recover, the Indians were upon them, shouting like demons and flourishing their tomahawks and their keen-edged hunting knives.

## CHAPTER XIX

### DEFEAT OF THE ENGLISH

THE explosion of the musket had been so unexpected that for the moment Dave and Henry hardly knew what had happened. Dave felt something hit him on the bottom of his left cheek and putting up his hand withdrew it covered with blood. Henry, too, was hit by a flying fragment of the gun barrel which clipped off a lock of his hair. Poor Barringford lay like one dead.

Before Dave could recover the Indians were on them, whooping as if their very lives depended upon it. One threw a tomahawk at Dave, but the aim was poor and the weapon buried itself in the log which had sheltered our friends.

But just at this moment, when all seemed lost, the battleground shifted and instantly thirty or forty English red-coats burst from the woods directly behind the Indians. A volley rang out and four of the red-men pitched forward, shot through the back. Other bullets hit the log behind which our friends lay, but Dave, Henry, and Barringford were not touched.

Attacked so unexpectedly from a new quarter, the Indians appeared dazed. They attempted to turn upon the English soldiers, but when two more were laid low, they fled to one side, where there was a dense growth of walnuts. The soldiers at once made after them, and another skirmish took place in the forest.

"Are you hurt much, Sam?" asked Henry, when he had recovered sufficiently to speak.

"I—I reckon not," was the gasped-out answer, after a long silence. Barringford opened his eyes and gazed ruefully at the gun stock which lay at his feet. "Busted! Well, by gum! Didn't think Old Trusty would do it nohow. Ain't ye ashamed?" And he shook his head dolefully. He had carried the firearm for many years, as our old readers know, and to have it "go back on him" like this hurt him more than had the explosion.

"It singed your beard pretty well," said Dave. "You can be thankful it didn't blow your face to pieces."

"We must get out of here!" cried Henry. "See, the French are coming!"

Henry was right, the French column had suddenly appeared on the brow of a neighboring hill. Those of the English who were in view received a galling fire and then the enemy came forward with

a rush. Our friends were glad enough to retreat, and join the main body of rangers once more.

Unfortunately for the English, Major Grant had divided his force and now as the French commander came on he ordered that the smaller of the English commands be surrounded. This was done, and though Major Grant did his best to bring his command together again, it was impossible to do so. The English became hopelessly separated, and by the time the fighting came to an end the major and a large number of his officers and men were made prisoners.

"We are catching it and no mistake," panted Dave, after another stand had been made, during which Barringford had provided himself with another gun—one taken from the hands of a dead grenadier. "The French mean business."

"Here they come again!" exclaimed Henry. "Look! look! they seem to have re-enforcements!"

Henry was right, and it must be admitted that the attack of the French, with the Indians on the left flank, was a superb one. The shock of the two armies coming together was terrific, and soon hand-to-hand encounters were taking place in hundreds of places at once. Guns and pistols rattled constantly and the keen frosty air of late fall was filled with smoke. The grass being wet with dew

many slipped and fell and not a few soldiers were trampled to death by frightened horses. It was a scene not easily forgotten and reminded Dave strongly of that other battle when General Braddock had suffered bitter defeat and death.

And bitter defeat was again to be the portion of the English. Major Grant's force was not strong enough to resist the combined onslaught of French and Indians, and at last word came to retreat, and in the gathering darkness the English fell back, taking with them a number of their wounded. How many of the wounded were left on that cold battlefield to die from exposure will never be known. Snow was now falling and a wind came up that chilled every soldier to the bone.

"It's another Braddock victory," said Barringford, sarcastically, as he limped painfully along, a horse having stepped on the toes of his left foot. "Them reg'lars don't understand fightin' in the woods nohow. Ye hev got to fight Injuns Injun fashion, an' French likewise. 'Twon't do no good to set yerself up like a target to be shot at."

"We have lost about three hundred men, killed, wounded and captured," said Dave. "I wonder what General Forbes will say to that?"

"I fancy he's too sick to say much," said Henry. He spoke thus for General Forbes had been on a

sick bed for several weeks and had had to be carried forward on a litter whenever his command moved.

The news that Major Grant's command had been whipped and driven back, and the major and many of his officers taken prisoners, was quickly sent to General Forbes, and at once a council of war was held. It was decided that the entire army should be sent forward without delay, and the soldiers moved onward as rapidly as the state of the road permitted. By the time the re-enforcements arrived the French and Indians had retreated to Fort Duquesne, for additional ammunition and general supplies, and to take care of their wounded and prisoners.

Once again Washington urged that a swift march be made on the fort. "It is our only chance of success," he said. "In a few weeks winter will be on us and then the campaign in this wilderness must come to an end."

There was no disputing his words, for the snow continued to fall and when it did not snow it rained and the wind kept growing colder and colder every day until even the most hardy of the soldiers began to grumble over the discomforts of camp life. Forward went the whole army, toiling painfully through the forest, where only an imperfect Indian trail led the way. General Forbes was now weaker

than ever and others urged him to go back. But, full of determination, he refused, and continued to direct the movements of his army from his sick bed. His devotion to duty was wonderful and something well worthy of being remembered.

Dave and Henry suffered with the other soldiers. Frequently when night came they had to rest in clothing that was soaked through and through, and the one grain of comfort they extracted from their situation was the thought that each day's march brought them so much nearer to the spot where they supposed little Nell was being kept a prisoner.

"I won't complain if only we get her back," said Henry. And Dave agreed heartily.

It was now the middle of November, and winter had begun to set in in earnest. Ice was forming on every pool and slow-running brook and snow storms were frequent, although none of them amounted to much. The nights were the worst and many a large camp-fire did the soldiers build to keep themselves warm. An advance guard was out constantly, to guard against a surprise, but no French or hostile Indians appeared.

Late one afternoon there were a number of shots fired in the distance and half an hour later a small van-guard came in bringing with them a number of French and Indian prisoners. These prisoners

were closely questioned and from them it was learned that the French and Indians at the fort were suffering greatly from sickness and from a lack of supplies,—the latter having failed to reach Fort Duquesne on account of the English victories in the north.

"If you hurry you may take the fort with ease," said one of the prisoners, who wished to curry favor with his captors.

This news was most encouraging and it was ordered that the main body of soldiers should push on again, leaving the artillery and supply wagons to come up later. The news placed Dave and Henry in the best of spirits, and they pushed on as quickly as anybody, with Barringford beside them.

But progress was slow, for there were many hills to cross, and on retreating the French had left many fallen trees in the pathway, and in one spot was a dangerous pitfall, into which the enemy had thrown several wolves. A couple of grenadiers fell into this pitfall and were sadly bitten by the half-starved beasts before being rescued.

At last those in advance reckoned that they were now but one day's journey from Fort Duquesne. The ground looked familiar to Dave and presently Barringford pointed out the spot where the young

soldier and his father had been re-united after the battle under Braddock.

Soon from a distance came a hurrahing, which every instant increased in volume. "The fort is deserted! The French and Indians are retreating!"

"Can that be possible?" burst from Henry's lips. "Come, let us find out!"

He rushed forward, and Dave and Barringford quickly followed. Soon they were in the vanguard, which was scrambling over fallen trees and brushwood and climbing the last hill which separated the English soldiers from the fort. There was a thick smoke ahead and presently they saw a column of flame shoot up, followed by a dull explosion.

"They have fired the fort," said Barringford. "Reckon as how they'll burn everything they can't carry."

By the time the soldiers reached the vicinity of the stronghold the fire was burning low. Only a small portion of the stockade was gone, with one or two small buildings and what had been left of the stores. An Indian was found nearby, suffering from a broken leg, and he gave the intelligence that the French command had retreated down the Ohio. Some had gone only a few hours before and others had left three days previous.

"And what of the prisoners they had?" asked Henry, as soon as he could get the chance.

"The prisoners were taken away three days ago."

"Were there any little girls among them?"

"Yes, four little maidens. One from the south and three from the east, with two women and forty-one men," was the reply.

"Three girls!" murmured Henry. "One of them must have been Nell! And they took them off three days ago? Oh, Dave, I'm afraid we have lost her forever!"

## CHAPTER XX

### AT FORT PITT—RETURN HOME

Dave could do but little to comfort his cousin and if the truth be told he felt almost as sad as Henry, for little Nell, with her bright ways and sweet disposition, seemed more dear to his heart now than ever.

"It's certainly too bad, Henry," he said, after the interview with the Indian had come to an end. "We might follow down the Ohio, but if they have three days' start there is small hope of our catching up. They'll think the English soldiers are after them and they'll push ahead just as hard as possible."

"Do you think General Forbes or Colonel Washington will go after them?"

Dave shook his head.

"No, General Forbes is too sick and winter is now at hand. He is certain to rest on his laurels."

So it proved. A small detachment was sent down the Ohio, and with this went our young soldiers and Sam Barringford. But this detachment returned to the fort three days later, having captured but

three Indians and one French trader, all of whom were found in a canoe too intoxicated to make good their escape.

The trader thus taken was named Varlette. He had once been attached to Jean Bevoir's trading post. Dave knew the man, having met him when out gunning with Barringford.

From Varlette they gained the information that Jean Bevoir had been at Fort Duquesne, having come in after the raid upon the homes of the Morrises, Uriah Risley and others. Some of Bevoir's bloodthirsty acts had been discountenanced by the French general in authority, and in something of a rage Bevoir had taken himself off, with his Indian followers and their prisoners.

"Now it ees for him to become von vite chief of de Indians,'" said Varlette. "Dat will suit heem, and will bring heem in von pot of money, for he vill make de vite peoples pay heem big money for de prisoners."

"The contemptible rascal!" cried Barringford. "Ef the rangers git holt o' him they'll hang him higher nor the tail o' a kite, hear me!"

"He'll deserve hanging, if he misuses little Nell and the others," returned Henry.

As soon as it was possible to do so, the fort was put in thorough repair, and the name was changed

to Fort Pitt, in honor of the prime minister of England. To-day this ground is covered by the city of Pittsburg, with its gigantic iron and steel works. What a mighty change from the lonely forest lands of less than a hundred and fifty years ago! Then called the West, or the Western Country, Pittsburg is now considered in the East. So has our country grown.

The fall of Fort Duquesne brought to a close the campaigns of 1758. The taking of this stronghold was hailed with delight by all the settlers in this section of the colonies, and they hastened to re-possess themselves of the homesteads which they had been forced to abandon during the two or three years previous.

As soon as the victory at Fort Duquesne assured peace upon the frontier for some time to come, Washington retired from the colonial troops and returned to Mount Vernon, to the large estate left by his brother, and which now demanded his attention. It may be added here that soon after this he married Mrs. Custis, afterward known to all as the gentle and loving Martha Washington. This was Washington's last appearance on the scene of battle during the French and English War. When next he took up the sword it was for American Independence.

It was not until early spring that Dave and Henry were released from duty and marched with a number of the militia back to Winchester. Their coming was hailed with delight by Mrs. Morris and the others, although all were downcast at the news that little Nell was still missing.

It was found that Joseph Morris was doing nicely and that Rodney was feeling better than ever. James Morris had been out to the homestead and had already cut the timber for another cabin, to take the place of that burned down.

"I also rounded up the most of our cattle and have all our horses and a new lot of chickens and pigs," said he. "So, although we have lost a good deal, we are not as bad off as we might be. The worst loss is the furniture we brought here when we came, years ago. That came from England and Germany and can't be replaced. But I'm reckoning on getting a few fancy pieces for sister Lucy from Annapolis, so things will look kind of homelike after awhile."

"Oh, James, you are very good!" cried Mrs. Morris. "But it won't be home until Nell comes back to it."

A few weeks later found all the Morrises at the homestead, if such the spot can be called. The burned place had been carefully cleaned off by

James Morris, and a temporary shelter had been made of a new cattle shed. Here the family went to live while the men and the boys began the construction of the new cabin. Rodney could not do such hard work but kept himself busy with the cattle and the poultry; and thus several weeks passed swiftly away.

Carpenter work pleased Dave and he was set at work making doors and window frames, and also several benches and a table or two, while the others attended to the raising of the cabin frame and the roofing and side boarding. Soon the cabin was fit for use and they moved in, and then Mr. James Morris made several trips to Winchester and one to Annapolis, taking Henry along, to buy the hundred and one things which were needed and which had either been burnt up or carried off by the Indians and their French allies. In the meantime Mrs. Morris busied herself in weaving a new rag carpet and toweling, and in making some necessary clothing, for to buy many of these things was, in those days, out of the question. Then Dave and Henry went hunting and brought down several deer and a number of rabbits and foxes, and once, when out with Sam Barringford, all three brought down a bear, and these skins were all properly tanned and then used for bed coverings and rugs.

On his return from Annapolis James Morris brought news of a new campaign against the French.

"We are going in for the entire conquest of Canada," he said. "Major General Amherst has been put in command of all the British forces, and the army is to be divided into three parts, one under Wolfe against Quebec, another under Amherst himself against Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and a third under General Prideaux, who is to march against Fort Niagara."

"Hurrah!" shouted Henry, "I hope we take Niagara. If we do it will cut the French entirely off from the Ohio and the Mississippi, and this ground will be safer than ever."

"Is Fort Niagara on the Niagara River?" questioned Mrs. Morris.

"It's located on the eastern bank of the river, just where that stream flows into Lake Ontario," replied her husband. "I understand it's a first-class stronghold—a good sight better than Fort Duquesne was. General Prideaux will have no fool of a task reducing it."

"I don't see how he's going to get there, unless he starts from Fort Duquesne and fights his way through the Indian lands," said Rodney. "If he tries that he'll certainly have his hands full."

"No, he's not to go that way," was James Morris's answer. "He's going up to Albany first and from there through the Mohawk valley to Oswego. At Oswego, if everything is favorable, he will take his way westward to Fort Niagara. They didn't say so, but I think he'll go by water from Oswego to Niagara. If he had the boats it would be the safest and quickest route."

"Is he going to take any rangers along?" questioned Dave, eagerly.

"Why, Dave, do you want to become a soldier again?" asked his father, turning to study his son's face.

"Yes, sir," was the prompt response. "I'll tell you why. So long as Canada remains unconquered just so long there is going to be trouble here and elsewhere. But once we show the French we are masters in America we'll have no further fuss, either with them or with the Indians. I go in for settling the matter, and doing it thoroughly and right away, too."

"Gallinippers!" ejaculated Barringford, who stood by, oiling up his flint-lock musket. "Dave, you're a reg'lar lawyer, hang me ef ye ain't! An' the argyment's right to the p'int, too. The Frenchers won't know they're beat until we lick 'em good an' hard, an' I go in fer doin' the lickin' right now.

Then, arfter it's done, we kin set out an' plow, an' raise cattle, an' hunt an' trap in peace,—an' the Injun who wants to raise a sculp every ten minits now will sit on a tree stump an' smoke his pipe an' look on," and Barringford shook his head earnestly. "Ain't no ust to talk," he went on. "It's like damming a stream—you dam it about half tight an' the fust lively rain will break the dam to bits; but you dam it good an' hard an' it will stick, no matter how hard it rains and by-an'-by the water will find out it's got to go a new way—an' the French an' Injuns will find they've got to leave the English alone. I ain't much on eddication, but I kin figger thet out, an' so kin any man whose head is level;" and Barringford resumed his gun oiling.

James Morris had much to tell that night—of his many purchases, and of the war talk he had heard at Annapolis and other cities he had visited. He, too, was interested in the expedition against Fort Niagara, for he felt that if the French power was broken in this direction he would be able to return to his trading post on the Kinotah without much fear of molestation from either French or Indians.

It was late that night when there came a sudden thumping on the cabin door. All sprang to their feet in alarm, and each of the men and the boys

reached for his firearm, which they were in the habit of having close at hand.

"Who is there?" demanded James Morris.

"It is I—Uriah Risley," came in the well-known voice of the Englishman. "Let me in. I've good news."

At once the cabin door was unbarred and flung back. All crowded forward, to behold Uriah Risley outside, on horseback. Beside him, also on horseback, was his wife, pale and thin, a mere shadow of her former self, but still able to ride alone.

"Well, I declare, Caddy Risley!" screamed Mrs. Morris, and ran out to greet the woman. "Is it really you or your ghost?"

"'Tis really me," was the answer, "although I sometimes feel like a ghost, I'm that thin."

"But mercy on us! Where have you been—with the Indians?"

"With them and with the French. I was with the Indians first—for many weeks—and then some French soldiers rescued me. They turned me over to some traders just before a battle with the English, and then the Indians and some French under Jean Bevoir got hold of me. They took me up through the Mohawk valley to Lake Ontario, and there I met a lot of other prisoners, your Nell with them."

"Nell!" the name came from several lips simultaneously.

"Yes, Nell and the Rose twins. They were with some Indians who are under Bevoir's thumb."

"And what of Nell now?" asked Mrs. Morris quickly.

"I think she is still with the Indians. A French soldier came along one day and carried me off in a canoe. He wanted to marry me, but I told him I was already married and then he set me ashore in the wilderness. I tramped for miles and miles, until I was so weary I could scarcely stand and I was almost dying of starvation, when I fell in with some German settlers. They took me to Fort Stanwix and from there I was taken to Albany, and finally made my way to Philadelphia, and then came on here. Uriah and I met at Winchester."

"Yes, and I nearly dropped dead from joy," put in the Englishman. "It was like getting her back from the grave. I could not at first believe my eyes. But it's really and truly my good wife, and I pray God we may never be separated again," concluded Uriah Risley, reverently.

## CHAPTER XXI

### ON THE WAY TO THE ARMY

ONCE inside the cabin, Mrs. Risley related her story in detail, to which the others paid the closest attention. Her trials had been great, and the quick tears of sympathy coursed down Mrs. Morris's cheeks as she listened, and the others were also affected.

"It was enough to kill you," said Mrs. Morris, at the conclusion. "But now you are back, safe and sound, we'll do our best by you. You can stay here until your husband builds another cabin and gets everything else into proper shape for living on your land." And so it was settled.

When Dave and Henry retired once more it was not to sleep but to talk in an undertone, the subject of the conversation being little Nell and the twins with her.

"I'm going to do what I can to rescue her," declared Henry. "It makes my blood boil to think of her being among those dirty redskins and French."

"I believe the best thing we can do is to join the army under General Prideaux," declared Dave. "His force will most likely go right through the Mohawk valley to Lake Ontario and then along the lake to Fort Niagara—just the territory where those Indians and French must be."

"I've got another idea," said Henry, after a thoughtful pause. "I got the news through White Buffalo. General Johnson has been commissioned to stir up the Indians in the Mohawk valley and get them to join in the attack on Fort Niagara. White Buffalo and his followers are going to join Johnson's force. Why not go with the white men in this crowd? We'll be sure to hear more about those Indians and the French traders in that way than if we went with the regular army."

"But to train with redskins, Henry!"

"We needn't train with 'em. There will be at least a dozen white men with the crowd and we can go with them. I once met General Johnson. He's a big-hearted Irishman, full of hard, common sense, and I know we could get along with him. And when he heard our story he might put himself out to help us."

So the youths talked on until at last they fell asleep—to dream of fierce fights with the French and Indians and daring rescues of little Nell. But

these were only dreams. Little did they realize how many real difficulties and perils still awaited them.

In the morning Dave insisted upon talking the matter over with Sam Barringford. They found the old hunter ready enough to listen to what they had to say.

"I'm with ye!" he exclaimed, after they had finished. "It ain't no half bad plan nuther. I know Sir William Johnson like a book—fact is, I know him a heap sight better nor any book. As ye say, he's whole-souled and chock full of common sense. The Injuns love him as they love few white men—an' all because he's treated 'em fa'r and squar'. Why he's done more fer the English government nor any dozen Indian Commissioners put together. He knows jest how to handle 'em, an' he makes friends o' foes almost afore ye can turn a hand. Yes, let us go to him by all means and I'll warrant when ye tell him the whole story he'll set some Injuns out to find little Nell an' them Rose twins."

That afternoon the subject was brought to the attention of the whole family. Mrs. Morris did not know whether to be glad or sorry, but in the end she told the boys to go, but be careful and not run into unnecessary danger, and in private she asked Barringford to watch over them carefully.

"I'll do my level best, ma'am," said the frontiers-

man. "And ef I can make it, they'll come back to ye unharmed. But they're putty hot-like when they strike a trail as suits 'em, ye know thet as well as I."

Preparations were at once made for their departure. Both Dave and Henry were fitted out with new hunting suits of the regular trapper pattern and each took along the best gun he could obtain. Sam Barringford had bought another rifle, which he christened Old Trusty No. 2. They went on foot, not knowing if their progress with the whites and Indians would admit of riding on horseback.

In the meantime it was decided that James Morris should remain at the cabin, to finish the building and do the planting, thus giving his brother ample time to regain his health and strength, and also making it easier for Rodney, who during the past few weeks had been working harder than was good for his constitution.

"Good-bye, my son," said James Morris, when the trio was ready to start. "Be careful, but do not forget that we look to you to bring little Nell back, if such a thing is possible;" and then Mrs. Morris kissed the boys; and the long journey into what had been the Indian country was begun.

Dave felt somewhat sober so long as they were in sight of the newly built cabin, but when the last

rise of ground was passed, and they had waved a parting farewell, to which Mrs. Morris had answered by a wave of her apron, his spirits returned, and soon he, Henry, and Barringford were chatting as though nothing out of the ordinary was occurring, yet down in his heart, each felt that this search for little Nell was going to prove a serious and, most likely, a dangerous undertaking.

"Where is Sir William Johnson now?" asked Dave, presently, after several miles of the trail through the forest had been covered.

"Somewhere near Fort Johnson," answered Barringford. "He's out to get the Six Nations to join General Prideaux's army either at Fort Stanwix or at Oswego—if Prideaux can get that far. Johnson is the very best man they could send to the Indians."

"Were you ever out with him?" asked Henry.

"Many a time, lad. He's a great hunter, too, let me tell you—can hit the bull's-eye at a hundred paces without half trying. And when it comes to dancing an Indian war dance he can do that, too."

"And yet he's an Irish nobleman!"

"Yes, I allow as how he's an odd mixture of a man. But that mixture makes him just the right kind for the redskins. He understands 'em—top, bottom and sides, as the saying goes. He appeals to their brains as well as their instincts—and when

he once makes friends of 'em they are willing to lay down their lives for him. In 1756 he was appointed sole superintendent of the Six Nations Indians, and he made a perilous trip all the way to Onondaga, their capital, and staid with 'em two weeks, and got 'em to swear that they would remain neutral. That was a big feather in his cap. Then the next year he joined Webb at Fort Edward with some of his Indians, but he was too late to do anything, although I've heard he was more than willing to fight. He was also on hand to fight Montcalm when Abercrombie attacked Ticonderoga, but his three hundred Indians didn't see the use of being slaughtered in the open at mid-day and they refused to fight, although they told Johnson they would take part in the battle in their own way."

"It's queer the English soldiers can't fight as we do," said Henry. "I really can't understand it. They get out in the open and the Indian gets behind a tree, and who has the best of it? Certainly not the man in the open."

"I think the English soldiers have learned a lesson or two," said Dave. "I don't believe you'll find General Prideaux marching on Fort Niagara in the broad sunlight."

They were trailing through a dense forest, with trees on every side, lifting their heads a hundred

feet and more to the sky. Gigantic roots lay sprawling on every side and they had to pick their way with care, for fear of pitching headlong or spraining an ankle. It was clear and moderately warm, and would have been warmer had the sunlight reached them.

"Years ago this was a great ground fer b'ar," said Barringford, as they rested for their noonday lunch, eating some things they had brought along from the cabin. "There war a cave 'bout two miles from here whar the b'ar ust to gather to the number of fifteen or twenty. But the cave was cleaned out so many times ain't likely to be any b'ar left."

"Shall we go near the cave?" questioned Dave. "I'd like to have a look at the spot."

"Yes, we'll go putty clost, lad. But you don't want to waste no time on game jest now, do ye?"

"Not unless it came very easy. If we got a bear it would give us some fine meat to take along, and we could sell the skin at Cherry Run."

"Ain't no b'ar there, I'm putty sure on it. But we can stop an' see—jest out o' curiosity sake."

They did not rest long, for they were anxious to join General Johnson at as early a date as possible, and knew that it would take them at least two weeks to make the trip. They were on rising ground, but soon they struck a downward path,

filled with rough rocks and loose stones, where the footing was far from certain.

"The cave is over yonder," said Barringford, pointing with his hand. "The opening to it is on the other side. Come, I'll show ye the way. And have your guns ready—in case a b'ar should turn up."

After this no more was said, and they went forward, side by side—so that no one might hinder the aim of a companion. There was a slight undergrowth between the rocks but for the most part only tall trees, bare for a distance of thirty feet upward, marked the locality.

Suddenly Barringford put up his hand, to warn his companions. All came to a halt and listened, at the same time straining their eyes to see what might be ahead. They heard a low thump, followed by another, and then all became as silent as before.

"What was it?" at last whispered Dave.

"Some wild animal," returned Barringford, in an equally low tone. "Don't reckon as how it was a b'ar though."

They waited a moment longer, and then the old hunter again led the advance. There were several large rocks to cross and then they rounded one end of the cave, which, on top, was shaped very much like a huge rocky egg.

"A deer!" ejaculated Henry. "Look out!"

All looked and saw a magnificent deer standing close to the mouth of the cave, gazing cautiously forward. Suddenly a fox leaped out of the opening and the deer started back in alarm.

Bang! It was the report of Barringford's rifle and the deer leaped high in the air, to fall dead immediately afterward.

"A good shot—" began Henry, when a noise behind him caused him to swing around swiftly. What he saw filled him with horror. A huge buck was glaring at him from the opposite end of the rocky eminence. In a second more the buck charged the crowd, rushing forward with lowered antlers and with the swiftness of the wind.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE FIGHT WITH THE BUCK

"Look out!"

These were the only words Henry had time to utter and as they left his lips he leaped to one side as swiftly as possible.

Hardly knowing what Henry meant, Dave and Barringford stood their ground, looking first one way and then another.

On the instant the big buck came forward. His rush was aimed at Henry, but missing that youth, he went onward with a wild plunge, directly between Dave and Barringford.

"A buck!" yelled the frontiersman. "Back out, Dave, an' be quick about it!"

He himself started on a run, reloading his rifle as he went. Dave wanted to do as bidden, but he had been so surprised that before he could turn his heel caught on a rock and down he went flat on his back. His gun struck on the trigger and went off, the charge tearing over the top of the cave into the tree branches beyond.

He leaped forward once again, straight for Dave. — *Page 199.*

Dave was now helpless and if the truth must be told the fall had more than half dazed him, for his head came down on a spot that was far from soft and comfortable. More than this, with an empty gun he could do but little to defend himself.

The big buck had now come to a halt and turned around. He stood as if uncertain whether to renew the attack or take to his heels. Then he gazed at his mate and a strange red light shone in his angry eyes. He was " blood struck," as old hunters call it, and drawing in a sharp, hissing breath, he leaped forward once again, straight for Dave, who was now trying to rise.

Bang! It was now Henry's gun that spoke up, and though the aim was not of the best—for Henry was excited because Dave was in such dire peril—the buck was struck in the shoulder and badly wounded. He leaped back and into the air, and when he came down lifted his right foreleg as if in intense pain. But he was still full of fight and now he came on once more, with eyes glittering more dangerously than ever.

Dave had not time to rise, so he did the next best thing, which was to roll over and over, until a clump of brush stopped his further progress. Then he slipped into the brush, worming his way to the other side.

The big buck came on and struck the brush a stunning blow that sent the stalks and twigs flying in all directions. Then the animal backed out and started for Henry, who had begun to reload.

All this had happened faster than I can relate it, yet it had given Barringford sufficient time to throw powder and ball into his gun and fix the priming. Now the old hunter came close to the side of the buck and blazed away once more, straight for those reddish eyes.

The shot was a telling one, for it tore out one eye completely and seriously damaged the other. Again the buck halted, and then turned slowly back and began to stagger off. But he could not see and in a moment more hit the rocks of the cave with a crash that could be heard for a considerable distance.

"Good for you, Sam!" cried Henry, who was now reloading. "I reckon we've got him."

"Don't be too sure," returned the old hunter. "He's got lots of fight in him yet."

Barringford was right, for again the buck turned and now catching a glimpse of Barringford through the blood of his wounds made a mighty leap for the frontiersman. But Barringford was too quick for him and leaping aside, sprang on the rocks of the cave, satisfied the wounded buck could not follow him to that spot.

By this time Henry had reloaded, and watching his chance he ran up and let drive for the buck's neck. This shot proved fatal, and rocking to and fro for several seconds the magnificent beast at last fell down on his side, and breathed his last.

"Is he—he dead?" came from Dave, as he pulled himself out of the tangle of brushwood.

"I think he is," replied his cousin. "But we had better make sure. Bucks are mighty tricky at times."

Taking out his hunting knife Henry went forward and cut the throat of the game. Then Barringford leaped from the rocks, and all went to inspect the buck.

"A regular monarch of the forest!" cried Dave, enthusiastically. "Don't know as I've ever seen a larger."

"Nor I," added Barringford. "An' he was a fighter, too, wasn't he?"

"We've got more deer meat now than we know what to do with," went on Dave.

"We don't want the meat of this buck," said Henry. "It would be as tough as all get-out. We can take the skin and some of the meat from that deer, and that will be enough; don't you say so, Sam?"

"Right you are, lad."

All were experienced in the work at hand, so it

did not take them long to skin both beasts and then the best of the deer meat was cut out by Barringford and rolled up in one of the pelts.

After this the march forward was again resumed.

That night they slept in the open, near a generous camp-fire, without being disturbed, and by sunrise were again on their way. They reached Cherry Run—a collection of half a dozen cabins—a little after noon, and here exchanged the skins and some of the meat for other things of more importance to them.

"There is a Dutch hunter here, who is going to join General Johnson," said the pioneer who gave them other things for their skins. "His name is Hans Schnitzer. Perhaps he'd like to go along with you—if you want him."

"What, old Dutch Hans, the beaver hunter!" exclaimed Barringford. "Why certainly I'd like him along. Thar's more fun in him nor in a barrel o' wasps. Whar is he?"

"He vos right here," came a voice from behind Barringford, and a short, stout individual stepped forward. His hair was red and his shock of a beard bore the same color. Above two sunburnt cheeks peeped two small eyes of blue, ever on a twinkle. He was dressed in the typical suit of the frontiers-

man of that day, buckskin leggings, coonskin cap and all.

"So you dinks dare vos more fun py me as mit von parrel of vasps, hey?" went on the Dutch trapper. "Vell, how apout dot dime ven you vos going to git dot pird's nest in der hollow dree und you stick your hand py dat vasps' nest, hey? Vosn't dot funny, hey? Ha! ha! ha! I see dot yet—mit you dancing arount like you vos a sailor on a pipe-horn, eh?"

"Gosh! don't mention it, Hans," returned Barringford, ruefully. "I kin feel them pesky wasps yet, fer they war the biggest I ever ran across. But put it thar, old boy, I'm downright glad to see you—an' after all the fightin' we've been a-havin', too. I suppose ye broke loose, didn't ye?"

"Vell I dinks me so," said Hans Schnitzer. "I vos up py dot Mohawk Valley, und I got me into nine fights by von veek vonce, und fourteen fights after dot." He removed his cap. "See dot mark? Dot is vere two Injuns tried to kill me—von mit a tomahawk und der udder mit his shcalpin' knife—dinking I vos dead. But I vasn't dead. I chumped up und ve rasselled und rasselled, und I got dem poth down ven, vot you dinks?—Cheneral Johnson himself come up—und dot vos der last of dose Injuns putty quick I can tole you."

"Good for the general," said Barringford. Then turning, he introduced Dave and Henry, and a general conversation ensued. The boys liked Hans Schnitzer from the start, and having often heard of the comical Dutch trapper, soon felt at home with him. Schnitzer knew exactly where Sir William Johnson's camp was located, and promised to take the party there by the shortest and easiest trail.

The party of four left Cherry Run early the next morning, each in the best of spirits, Schnitzer gaily humming a song of the Fatherland. The trail led almost due north, until a small stream was reached. Here, in a convenient spot, the Dutch trapper had a canoe secreted. This they entered and followed the stream for a distance of thirty miles, when they again struck out on foot, this time over the hills leading into the beautiful Mohawk Valley.

Day after day passed without anything unusual happening. Game was to be had in plenty, and it often made Henry heart-sick to leave it behind without taking a shot.

"A regular Paradise!" he said. "When this war is over, how I would like to come up here and knock around for a few weeks. I reckon I could make it well worth while."

"You'll find game just as plentiful at father's post on the Kinotah," answered Dave. "If father

can ever get the post back, you must make a trip out there with me."

Ever since leaving home Dave had wanted to see a bear, and one day, just before the sun was setting, his wish was gratified. But the game was too far away for shooting, and before they could get closer the bear took to his heels and went crashing out of sight in the brushwood.

"Never mind, lad, we'll go b'ar huntin' another day," said Barringford, consolingly. "Jest fer the present, we have other ground ter plough, as the sayin' goes."

At the end of ten days the journey began to grow tiresome to the boys, and they were glad when Schnitzer announced that another day would more than likely bring them in sight of General Johnson's camp.

That night they encamped on the bank of the Mohawk, in an ideal spot covered with brush and some timber. All were thoroughly tired, for the day's tramp had been a long one, and Dave and Henry were glad when preparations for supper were at an end and there was nothing more to do than to eat and go to sleep.

It had been a clear day, but with the coming of night, the sky had clouded over, showing that a storm was not far off, although neither Barringford

nor Hans the trapper thought it would rain before morning.

"Put ven it does come, I dink me it vos come hardt," said Schnitzer. "Maype it vos rain for two or fife days, eh?"

"Oh, I hope it doesn't rain as long as that!" cried Dave. "Why, we'll be drowned out."

The wood was piled on the fire, and a little later all lay down to rest, and it did not take Henry and Dave long to reach the land of dreams. They lay on one side of the cheerful blaze while the two men lay on the other. The wind was blowing the smoke from the fire directly across the river, so this did not bother them.

Dave had been asleep three hours when he suddenly awoke and gave a cough. Thinking that he was in danger of being smothered by the smoke he sat up and gazed at the fire. The wind had shifted slightly, but not enough to do any harm.

"No use of waking up the others," he thought. "They need every bit of sleep they can get. That wood is about burnt out anyway, so there won't be much more smoke."

He was about to lie down again, when the snapping of some brushwood behind him caught his ear. Turning he caught sight of an Indian crouching in

the bushes gazing at him. Then came a noise from another direction and four other redmen glided into view. All were armed with guns, and at once Dave realized that the camp was surrounded.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### UP THE MOHAWK VALLEY

"HENRY! Sam! Schnitzer! Wake up! The camp is surrounded by Indians!"

Dave uttered the cry loudly, and on the instant Barringford leaped to his feet, reaching for his ever-ready gun as he did so. The Dutch trapper was also awake in short order, and Henry followed.

"Injuns?" queried Barringford. "Whar?"

"In those bushes, and behind yonder trees. What shall we do?"

Before the old frontiersman could answer that question, a voice came out of the darkness:

"Are the white men English?"

"Yes, we're English," answered Barringford.

"Then the redmen are glad to meet their brothers. The redmen were afraid the sleeping ones were French."

"Who are you?" asked Henry.

"Arrow Head, of the Miamis. We have joined the great English warrior Johnson, to fight the French. Let us be friends."

A few words more followed, and Barringford told the Indians to come forward. At this eight redmen advanced to the camp-fire, on which the boys threw some extra brushwood, so that they might see the new arrivals. The Indians had slung their weapons over their shoulders, as a sign of peace, and our friends did likewise.

Schnitzer had met Arrow Head before, and said he would vouch for it that the warrior was all right. From the under chief it was learned that General Johnson, with seven hundred Indians, had already marched to meet General Prideaux and that the camp of the army was some forty miles distant, up the river. Arrow Head had been left behind to "drum up" a few stragglers, but was now ready to go forward with the redmen under him.

"The war talk at Canajoharie castle was a great one," said the under warrior. "Your General Johnson has treated us like brothers, and we will fight for him to the bitter end. We have sung our war songs and put on our war paints, and no French soldiers shall stand up against us. Henceforth the English shall be our brothers for evermore."

"Yah, now you vos talkin' common sense," put in Schnitzer. "Ven you fight mid dem Frenchers you vos all fools—for dem Frenchers vill pe licked chust so sure as Henry Hudson discovered New York.

I peen a Dutch prophet, und I know," and he said this so earnestly that Arrow Head was duly impressed. Schnitzer, who afterward made himself famous as a pioneer in Ohio, could do a few sleight of hand tricks, and because of these tricks many of the redmen considered him something of a wizard.

All rested until daybreak and then, after a hasty breakfast, in which the Indians joined the whites, the march forward was resumed. Soon it began to rain, but the drops did not come down heavily, and Barringford said the storm had shifted to the westward. In this he was right for by noon the sun was shining as brightly as ever.

As they trudged along, Dave and Henry questioned Arrow Head concerning the French Indians and their captives, and about Jean Bevoir. They could, however, get little satisfaction, excepting that Arrow Head had heard that all the captives had been removed to the shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, and that a general movement toward Montreal and Quebec was contemplated.

While our friends were trudging through the woods northward, General Prideaux had gone to Schenectady. He had with him his own division of the army consisting of two regiments of English soldiers and twenty-six hundred Americans, principally from New York, although with the New Yorkers

were a good sprinkling of rangers from Vermont, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia, men who roamed from one colony to another, looking for a chance to better themselves and ever ready for a fight, be it with the French or the Indians.

From Schenectady General Prideaux moved up the Mohawk Valley, which was the most direct route to the lakes. This old Indian trail was protected by Fort Herkimer, Fort William, Fort Stanwix, Fort Bull, and other fortifications along the river and Lake Oneida. But this great wilderness was a wilderness still, with stopping places few and far between, and had it not been for the friendliness of the Indians—thanks to the good work done by General Johnson—matters might have gone badly with the English. More than once there was an alarm and at night sentries were posted with as much care as though they were in the very heart of the enemy's country.

It was not until three days after meeting Arrow Head and his followers that our friends came in sight of General Prideaux's command, toiling painfully around some of the rapids in the river. This first sight of the army was a thrilling one, for uniforms and weapons shone brightly in the clear sunlight. Dave's heart gave a bound.

"Puts me in mind of the time I marched with Braddock," he said to Henry. "Indeed, it might almost be the same scene over again."

"Well, let us hope it isn't the same defeat over again," returned his cousin, grimly.

The army came to a halt half an hour later, and then they learned that General Johnson and his Indians were miles away. They talked the matter over and at length concluded to move forward with the soldiers, trusting to luck to interview Johnson later.

It was an easy matter for Barringford and Hans Schnitzer to locate a number of friends among the rangers, and they received a hearty welcome, and Dave and Henry were put at their ease. One old soldier asked Dave if he had seen much of the war, and when the lad told him he had been both with Braddock and with Forbes in the attacks on what was now Fort Pitt the old soldier shook his hand warmly and "reckoned as how" he'd "do fust-rate to fight them Frenchmen at Fort Niagara."

Our four friends were assigned to a company under Captain John Mollett, who was known to Barringford, and inside of a couple of days felt thoroughly at home.

In those days the Mohawk River was navigable with canoes and batteaux to within four miles of Lake Oneida. From this point the boats had to be

carried across the watershed, on the backs of horses, Indians, and soldiers to the lake. From Lake Oneida it was clear sailing down the Oswego River to Lake Ontario.

As they had done so many times in the past, some of the English soldiers were apt to sneer at the provincials, and this led to more than one wordy quarrel and not infrequently to blows.

"They make me sick!" declared Henry, one day, after listening to the bluster of several grenadiers. "To hear them talk one would think only they were able to fight. I reckon we can do our full share."

"If they say anything to me I'll tell 'em what happened under Braddock," returned Dave. "And they can take it as they please."

Barringford counseled moderation, but secretly he was as much put out as the boys even though some of the English were his warm friends. He had come near to having a quarrel with an English lieutenant named Naster and he was still much disturbed over this.

That very night Dave, while on picket duty, heard Lieutenant Naster finding fault with an old ranger named Campwell. Campwell was a pioneer over sixty-five years of age, and while a good shot and a good fighter was at times not just right in his mind, although he could by no means be called crazy. The

pair came close to where Dave was on guard and the young soldier heard the lieutenant poke all manner of fun at the old man.

"Better go home and mind the babies, Campwell," said the English lieutenant. "It's more in your line of duty, isn't it now?"

"Let me alone!" cried the old man. "If I was to mind babies I'd not mind such a one as you, I'll warrant. 'T would have been better had you remained in England."

"Ha! so you call me a baby?" roared Lieutenant Naster, sourly. "If I am, how do you like that from me?" And he gave the old pioneer a shove that sent him headlong over the roots of a nearby tree.

The action was so cowardly, and so entirely uncalled for, that it made Dave's temper rise on the instant, and regardless of consequences he leaped to where Lieutenant Naster was standing and caught him by the shoulder.

"Leave him alone, you brute!" he ejaculated. "How dare you treat an old man like that?"

In sudden fear the English lieutenant wheeled around. When he saw it was only a boy who had spoken, and a hated provincial at that, his rage returned.

"What do you mean by placing your dirty hand

on me!" he roared. "I'll have you arrested on the spot! This to me—an officer of the King's Guard! Preposterous!"

"It wasn't right to molest old Campwell," returned Dave, sturdily. "He is as brave as any of us, and I have heard tell that he has fought well all through this war. You ought——"

"Don't tell me what I ought to do, you dirty little plantation hand! Say another word and I'll report you at headquarters."

"As you please," answered Dave, recklessly. "But if you worry Campwell any more you'll have an account to settle with Colonel Haldimand—and I can tell you that he won't put up with it any more than any of us."

At the mention of the officer in charge of the provincials the English lieutenant was for the moment nonplussed. He knew Colonel Haldimand to be a Swiss-American of stern military bearing and one to whom many of the pioneers were warmly attached.

"You—you threaten me?" he asked, after an ugly pause.

"You can take it as you please."

"My affair with this old man was my own—not yours."

"Yes, but I'm glad he took my part," came from

Campwell, as he arose slowly to his feet, for the fall had deprived him of his breath. "You took a mean advantage o' me. I've a good mind to fill ye full o' buckshot!" And he caught hold of his gun threateningly.

It was now that Lieutenant Naster showed his true nature. Much of his color forsook him and he retreated in alarm.

"Don't—don't!" he cried, hurriedly. "I—I didn't mean to be—ah—serious. The whole thing was meant in fun."

"No fun in shoving me down."

"I—ah—I didn't mean to shove you so hard—upon my honor I did not, Campwell. Let us drop it; won't you?"

The old pioneer gave a grunt. He was too open-hearted to understand such a mean, sneaking nature as that of the Englishman.

"We'll drop it—but keep your hands off of me in the future," he said, at last.

"I won't bother you. But you—" The lieutenant turned to Dave. "I'll bear you in mind, my fine young cock-of-the-walk,—and I'll take you down a peg or two ere I'm done with you, remember what I say!" And with a shake of his fist he hurried away in the darkness.

A minute after this Barringford came up, asking

what was the matter. When told his brow contracted.

"That lieutenant is a regular sneak," he said. "Keep your eye open fer him, Dave—an' don't trust him a farthing's worth. He is just the kind to play you dirty the first chance he gits."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### HENRY IS ATTACKED

THE days to follow were full of hard work for the young soldiers. They were detailed with the baggage corps, and had all they could do to bring through the many things left in their care. Although Dave did not know the truth, it was Lieutenant Naster who had much of this work piled on the young soldier's shoulders.

The sail down Lake Oneida proved a period of rest, for which both Dave and Henry were truly thankful. Both made the journey in a long and wide batteau, commonly called to-day a flat-bottom boat. It was now the end of June and the weather was hot. On one occasion the youths went in bathing, but this time nothing molested them. They also went fishing and brought out as nice a mess of fish as the clear waters of this lake afforded.

"It's an ideal spot for a home," said Dave. "Puts me in mind of the Kinotah."

"If the Kinotah is as good as this I wouldn't want anything better," replied Henry.

The batteau, of extra-large size, was filled with baggage, and besides the boys there were ten rangers on board, including old Campwell. The old man sat in the rear of the craft, eyeing the shore critically.

"My eyesight ain't none o' the best," he drawled, presently. "But onless I'm in error, I jest see a number o' Injuns behind yonder skirt o' bushes."

All looked in the direction, and presently one of the other rangers said that he, too, saw at least two Indians. They appeared to be following up the boats and at the same time did all they could to keep hidden.

"What do you make of that?" asked Henry of Barringford, who was pulling an oar beside him.

The old frontiersman shrugged his shoulders. "Depends on whether they are friends or enemies, Henry," he said. "If they are friends more'n likely they'll jine us when we reach the river."

"And if not?"

"Then they ought to be captured, for if they ain't friends they are spying for the French."

Evidently the Indians had not been discovered by those on the other batteaux, and after a short talk the man in charge of that containing our friends decided to report the case to his superior, in a boat some distance ahead. Pulling with all strength, the

clumsy craft was, in quarter of an hour, brought alongside of Captain Mollett's boat.

"Indians, eh?" said the captain, reflectively. "Couldn't make them out very well, could you?"

"No, captain."

"Hum! We'll have to investigate this."

Word was passed to several other batteaux, and soon after a boat turned toward shore, having on board fifteen rangers, including Barringford and Henry. Dave and Schnitzer wished to accompany the others but this was not permitted.

"Good-by until we meet again!" cried Henry, on leaving.

"Take good care of yourself," returned Dave, and so with a wave of the hand the two cousins parted.

It did not take the batteau long to reach the north shore of the lake, and as soon as the craft grounded all leaped out. Fastening the boat to a nearby tree, the rangers set out on a search for the Indians.

The party was under the command of George Harvey, well known as an old Indian fighter of the Mohawk valley and a man who was as shrewd as he was daring. He had brought the rangers ashore boldly, but once in the shelter of the timber he halted his men to give them advice.

"We'll spread out in a straight line, due north,"

he said. "Each man about thirty yards from the next. Then we can beat up the timber thoroughly. Don't fire until you're sure of what you are doing, for to kill a friendly Indian just now would be the worst thing we could do. General Johnson would never forgive you for it. He had hard enough work to make 'em come over to us."

It fell to Henry's lot to skirt the shore of the lake, with Barringford next to him. The way was easy where the trail ran close to the water, but at other points was exceedingly difficult, for big stones and thick brushwood frequently blocked his progress.

"Phew! but this is no child's play!" he muttered to himself, as he came out on a point of the shore where the sun blazed down fiercely. "A fellow couldn't feel any hotter plowing corn or turning hay. I'd rather go swimming than hunt up Indians, I must confess."

His soliloquy was broken by the flitting of something from one tree to another, some distance ahead. The movement was so rapid, and the distance so great, that he could not settle in his mind what the object had been.

"Was that an Indian, or some big wild bird?" he asked himself. Drawing back into the shelter of some bushes he held his gun ready for use, and gazed ahead with much interest.

The sun was now well down in the west, so his shadow fell in front of him as he gazed eastward. Of a sudden another shadow loomed up beside his own. He turned, but before he could defend himself, he was hauled back and his gun was wrenched from his grasp. He tried to cry out, but a red hand was instantly clapped over his mouth.

Henry tried his best to free himself but it was useless. Two brawny warriors had attacked him, and now one of the redmen flourished a long hunting knife in his face, at the same time muttering some words of warning in a guttural tone. Henry did not understand the language spoken, but he knew what was meant—that he would be killed if he attempted to either fight or cry out—and so for the time being he lay still.

At a distance the young soldier heard the sounds of footsteps, and he rightfully surmised that Barringford was continuing his journey forward, with the rest of the rangers. Soon the sounds died away and all became as silent as the grave.

But the Indians did not wish to take any chances and so the one with the knife continued to stand over the young soldier until his companion was certain the whites had gone on. Then he emitted a short and peculiar bird-like whistle.

In less than two minutes fully a dozen warriors

appeared on the scene, crawling from behind logs and rocks and from holes among the tree roots. All came forward and gazed curiously at the prisoner.

A parley lasting but a few minutes followed. Henry tried his best to make out what was said, but this Indian dialect was entirely new to him. He half suspected that these redmen had come down into New York from the north shore of Lake Ontario and in this he was not mistaken. They were spies, as it was long afterward proved, sent out by Saint Luc de la Corne, the French officer in command at Isle Royal, afterward called Chimney Island.

The coming ashore of the English had evidently disconcerted the Indians and they hesitated over what should be their next move. But at last they set off on a rapid march northward, taking Henry with them. The young soldier's hands were bound behind him and he was given to understand that if he did not move along as suited them he would be killed on the spot.

"A nice pickle I'm in and no mistake," he mused, as the party toiled up a long hill and through a dense patch of timber where the undergrowth almost barred all progress. "These redskins won't give me the slightest chance to get away, and where they are taking me is more than I can guess. Won-

der what Barringford will say when he finds I am missing?"

Some time after this a distant shot sounded out, at which all of the Indians came to a halt. The shot was followed by several others, all coming from the direction of the lake.

"Perhaps they are signals meant for me," thought Henry. "Oh, if only Barringford and the others strike the right trail!"

The shots having come to an end, the forward march was resumed, and the party did not halt again until long after nightfall. Henry was bound to a tree and one of the Indians, who seemed less bloodthirsty than the others, gave him a bit of meat, some corn cakes, and a drink of water. The young soldier thanked the redskin and tried to engage him in conversation, but the Indian merely shook his head and walked away.

When the Indians retired for the night Henry was tied to a short stake driven deeply into the ground. This allowed him to rest on one side or the other, but still kept his hands behind him—a most uncomfortable position. But lying down, even like that, was better than standing against the tree, and he was so tired he was soon fast asleep.

A kick in the ribs awoke him at early daybreak,

and after a light breakfast, the Indians resumed their journey. In a short time they gained a small stream, and from a hiding place brought forth several canoes. Henry was made to enter one of the canoes and the whole party began to paddle down the stream swiftly and in the utmost silence.

The watercourse was less than five yards wide and in many places the branches of the trees on the opposite banks intertwined, forming a long, low bower, beneath which the sunlight was hardly able to penetrate. Outside it was hot and dry, but on this stream it was deliciously cool, and under other circumstances Henry would have enjoyed the canoe trip greatly. Game was plentiful and frequently popped up within easy shooting distance. The Indians did not use their guns, however, although a number of birds and a deer were brought down by the aid of a bow and arrows in the hands of an Indian in the front canoe.

Before the trip on the river came to an end Henry calculated that they had covered at least sixteen miles. They went ashore just above a small waterfall and now the Indians took their canoes with them. The party turned westward, and Henry guessed that they were bound for the eastern shore of Lake Ontario.

" If they once get me on the lake I'll be booked for Canada, that's certain," he mused, dismally. " If only I had half a chance I'd run for it, even though I'd risk being shot."

## CHAPTER XXV

### A STORM ON LAKE ONTARIO

When the soldiers under General Prideaux reached Oswego they found the fort in ruins. Three years before the French and Indians under Montcalm had won a victory there and before leaving had burnt up and otherwise destroyed every building, large and small, and also every ship in the harbor, and had taken away all the guns and ammunition and a large part of the possessions of the settlers in that vicinity. On every side were heaps of ashes and charred logs, some overgrown with weeds, and in the midst of these stood a huge wooden cross, erected by Piquet, the French priest, and on a tall pole hung the tattered arms of France. The scene was one of unutterable loneliness and desolation, and it must be confessed that something like a shiver went over Dave as he gazed upon it.

"This shows what war will do," he said, to a comrade standing near. "Think of how prosperous a trading post Oswego was three years ago, and now look at this. Why even a wild animal would

shun the spot—after those skeletons were picked clean."

"True for you, lad," was the answer. "But I don't think it will be that way again. General Prideaux means business, and so does General Johnson, and the French will have to do some tall fighting to win out now."

The first of the soldiers arrived on the site of Oswego about the middle of June, and it was only a few days later the remainder of the army came up from Lake Oneida bringing the stores and baggage, including a great many barrels of pork, which in those days formed a staple article of soldiers' diet.

Dave was anxious to see Henry and Barringford again, and when the last of the soldiers came up and went into camp not far from the lake and the river, he hurried in that direction as soon as he was off duty.

"Oh, Sam!" he cried, when he caught sight of the old frontiersman and saw the serious look on his face. "Where's Henry?"

"I can't tell you, Dave."

"Can't tell?"

"No, lad. After we went ashore at Lake Oneida he disappeared like as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up."

"But—but didn't you look for him?"

"Dave you oughter know better nor to ask sech a question. Look? Why, I tramped miles an' miles a-looking fer him,—an' fer them Injuns. But the redskins got away, and we couldn't find Henry, alive or dead."

"Then they must have taken him prisoner."

"Thet's it, unless——"

"Unless what, Sam?"

"Wall, I don't like to say, lad. Let us hope fer the best."

"You mean they might have killed him and thrown his body into the lake?"

"Yes."

Dave drew a long breath. The thought was a horrible one. He shook his head dismally.

"You didn't hear any shots, or any struggling?"

"Nary a sound, Dave. We went along as silently as ghosts and with our ears wide open. I know Henry was along when we moved up the lake, but I missed him jest as soon as we turned to come back. He had been next to the lake front and I walked over to find out if he had seen anything of the Injuns. But he was gone—and that was the end of it—although I and the others hunted around until we simply had to give it up and come back to report."

It was dismal news, and all Barringford could do did not cheer Dave up. "First it was little Nell

and now it's Henry," he said, soberly. "If neither of them return what will Aunt Lucy say?"

As soon as the army was settled at Oswego General Prideaux had all of the batteaux and other boats made ready for the trip along the lake shore to Fort Niagara, a distance of about a hundred and thirty miles. In the meantime Colonel Haldimand was placed in charge of the garrison to be left at Oswego, with orders to rebuild the fort, and otherwise strengthen the place, as speedily as possible. Haldimand, who during the Revolution became Governor of Canada, was an able and energetic officer, and went about the work assigned to him without delay. Soon the ring of the axe was heard in the forest and the big timbers for the new fort were being brought out as fast as the pioneer-soldiers could handle them.

Prideaux had expected to embark for Niagara within a few days after reaching Oswego where he was joined by Johnson with his seven hundred Indians, but numerous delays occurred and it was not until the first of July that his novel flotilla of boats, batteaux, and canoes set sail westward over the mighty waters of Lake Ontario. All the time that the army was at Oswego a sharp lookout was kept for the possible appearance of French ships of war, or of transports carrying French troops, but none came in sight.

"Not a sail in sight anywhere," said Dave to Schnitzer one day, when the two were at the beach. "If the French are near they are keeping themselves well hidden."

"Maybe da vos vaiting for a chanct to cotch us nabbing," answered the Dutch soldier. "Dose Frenchers peen mighty schmart let me tole you. Of da don't vos schmart den dis var vouldn't peen so long vinded, hey?"

"Oh, they know what they are doing, no doubt of that. I wouldn't be surprised if they attacked Colonel Haldimand after we go away."

"Yah, dot is it, Tave—da vaits bis ve peen sphlit by two bieces und den da fights first one bard und den der udder bard—und ve peen licked our poots out, hey—maybe—of da peen schmart enough." And Hans Schnitzer nodded his shaggy head vigorously.

Dave had been wondering if he would be ordered to remain behind with those left at Oswego or if he was to go forward to Fort Niagara. He half wished he would be told to remain behind, that he might have a chance to go in search of Henry.

But this was not to be, and a few days later came word that the company to which he belonged would go forward under General Prideaux.

"But I'm a-going to be left behind," said Sam

Barringford. "I've got orders to take charge o' the sharpshooters as is going to watch out here while Colonel Haldimand rebuilds the old fort."

"Oh Sam, if you stay behind, won't you keep an eye open for Henry?"

"To be sure I will, lad—thought o' thet myself."

"Do you think those Indians are still sneaking around?"

"More'n likely not, Dave. Not if they war French spies. They've gone across the lake to give warning of our coming."

"If they had Henry a prisoner they would take him along."

"Yes,—or worse."

Dave shook his head sadly, and went about his work, which was to see to the loading of two batteaux, that were piled high with utensils belonging to the culinary department of the army—for soldiers, like ordinary mortals, must eat and if they are not served properly there is apt to be a good deal of grumbling.

One day later the army was off, in a long string of batteaux and other craft stretching out a distance of over a mile. It was truly an imposing sight, for the leading batteau was flying the flag of England, and other banners were by no means lacking. There was music, too, to lighten up the hearts

of the soldiers, and ringing cheers for good luck to the enterprise.

It was General Prideaux's plan to hug the shore of the lake, consequently the trip would be a little longer than if they sailed in a direct line from Oswego to what is now the coast town of Carlton. The reason for hugging the shore was, that the French might swoop down upon the flotilla at any moment when out of sight of land, whereas, if the English kept close to shore, they could at any moment turn into one of the numerous bays or creeks, and there hide or throw up a temporary defense.

The southern shore of Lake Ontario is to-day dotted with villages and towns, but when General Prideaux's army sailed along this coast it showed an almost unbroken front of gigantic timber, rough rocks and stretches of sandy waste. Here and there was an Indian village, but the warriors were away, either with the French or the English.

Much to Dave's disgust Lieutenant Naster was placed in charge of the batteau, which contained besides Dave several soldiers who were hardly known to our young soldier. When Naster saw Dave, he scowled but said nothing.

"He has it in for me, that's certain," thought Dave. "I'll have to keep my eyes wide open."

"I want none of your laziness," said the lieuten-

ant, to Dave, an hour later, and when all hands were resting on the oars. "I see you are not pulling as well as the others, and it won't do."

"I thought I was doing my full share," answered Dave.

"Hi don't answer back, boy! Do as I tell you!"

In a few minutes the rowing was resumed. One of the soldiers, unnoticed by the lieutenant, winked at Dave.

"He's a regular bear," he whispered. "Look out, or he'll make trouble for you."

"He's tried to make trouble for me before," answered Dave, in an equally low tone. "He doesn't like me because I stood up for old Campwell when he was browbeating the man."

"Oh, so you were the soldier who interfered, eh? I heard of that case. They say——"

"Silence over here, and attend to your rowing!" shouted the lieutenant from his comfortable seat in the stern. "Don't you see how we are lagging behind? Pull up there, all of you, or somebody will get the lash to-night, instead of his supper."

After that but little was said, and the rowing continued steadily until noon, when a brief halt was made for dinner. The lake was almost like glass, so that while some of the batteaux drifted together, no damage was done.

"If I know anything about it, this weather won't last," said one of the soldiers, after a careful survey of the sky.

"It looks like a storm to me, too," said Dave. "But it may blow around before it reaches here."

Yet the day passed without the storm coming, and that night the occupants of the batteaux slept soundly on the shore of a tiny bay opening up from the lake. At sunrise the army was again in motion and once again the flotilla continued its journey westward.

Several soldiers who had been taken sick on the march to Oswego had been left behind, but now others were overcome by the heat and the glare of the sun on the water, and one batteau had to be turned into a floating hospital. At one time Dave himself felt dizzy, but he said nothing, for he well knew that Lieutenant Naster would have no mercy on him, sick or well.

The sun had come up over the water like a great ball of fire and by nine o'clock the day promised to prove more than usually hot. But an hour later the clouds began to show up in the west and it became rapidly cooler.

"We're in for that storm now," said a soldier to Dave. "See how the wind is rising."

"Yes, and we are pretty far out from land now,

too," added Dave. "I reckon we ought to turn in."

One of the soldiers appealed to the lieutenant, but he would not listen to advice. "Straight ahead," he roared. "You only want to go in that you may rest. We have no time to fool away. A little rain won't hurt anybody."

The wind rapidly increased in violence, and soon the black clouds overshadowed the sun, making the surface of the lake dark and ominous looking. Then came a gust that whirled the batteau around in spite of all the rowers could do to keep the craft up to the wind. The waves dashed up, drenching everybody.

"Oh!" cried Lieutenant Naster, for he had received some of the water full in the face. "Steady there, you fools! Don't let her swing around!"

"If we don't pull to shore we'll be swamped!" cried one of the soldiers. "I was a sailor for six years and I know this is going to be a big blow. Give the order, lieutenant, unless ye want to see bottom putty quick."

At these words Lieutenant Naster turned pale. "Very well, turn about and pull for the shore," he said. "And don't lose time," he added, as he saw the white caps chasing madly toward them.

With much difficulty the clumsy batteau was swung around and the journey shoreward began. But valuable time had been lost, and now the rain

"Bail her out," roared the lieutenant. — *Page 237.*

came down in a deluge, shutting out the view on every side. The wind whistled a gale and in the midst of the downpour came a vivid flash of lightning and a crack of thunder that was deafening.

As much for his own safety as for the others, Dave bent to his oar with a will, pulling with might and main. The sight of land was now shut out and the task was therefore a blind one. On they went, the wind blowing the waves into the batteau until the craft was speedily in danger of becoming waterlogged.

"Bail her out!" roared the lieutenant, who was now as much alarmed as anyone. "Bail her out, or we'll go to the bottom!"

"Bail her out yourself;" came a voice from the front of the craft. "None of us can leave the oars. Pull away, boys,—it's our only chance!"

It was the man who had been a sailor who spoke, and all the other soldiers obeyed him, leaving the lieutenant to take up an iron dipper and begin the bailing as best he could.

A moment later came a wild cry from beyond the batteau. "Look out, you are running into us! Back water!" The cry was followed by a thump and a crash and half a dozen yells of pain, and then ensued a wild scramble for safety, for two of the batteaux had come together with such force that the bottom

of each was broken away on one side, letting in the lake water with a rush.

When the collision came Dave was thrown over backward, into the lap of the soldier who had once been a sailor. Each clutched the other, and both struggled to their feet wondering what would happen next. Then the batteau began to settle and in a moment more Dave found himself struggling in the waters of Lake Ontario.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE ATTACK AT OSWEGO

"I WONDER when this will end?"

Such was the question which Henry asked himself, after he had been a prisoner of the Indians for a week and more.

The warriors had marched him to the eastern shore of the lake, and here he had been left in charge of two young warriors while the balance of the party had taken canoes and disappeared in the direction of Frontenac.

The days had passed slowly. The warriors had found something of a cave fronting the lake shore and Henry had been placed in this. His hands were bound behind him almost constantly, they being released only when he was eating or when both of his captors were at hand with their guns to watch him.

The young soldier often wondered what had become of Sam Barringford and the others who had been in the party that had landed on the shore of Lake Oneida. Had they too been captured and carried off, or had they been killed?

"Sam ought to have been able to follow their trail," he reasoned. He did not know that the trail had been followed as far as the stream where the Indians had first brought forth their hidden canoes.

In the meantime the Indians had gone to Saint Luc de la Corne and explained the situation to him. The French commander at once gathered together twelve hundred men, consisting of Canadian pioneers and Indians, and set out to do the English battle. He felt that a force would be left behind at Oswego and this he determined to annihilate as soon as General Prideaux had gone on with the main portion of the English army.

The coming of over a hundred Indians to the camp on the lake front surprised Henry and he wondered what was in the wind. But he soon found out, for several of the newcomers could talk English and they did not hesitate to speak of the contemplated attack on Colonel Haldimand's command, and of their high hopes of again laying Fort Oswego in ashes and scalping all who should remain to defend it.

After hearing this talk Henry burnt with a desire to obtain his freedom and warn Haldimand of what was coming. For this purpose he resorted to a ruse which worked better than he anticipated. He pretended to be very sick and whenever the Indians

came near groaned dismally and put his hand to his head and then to his breast as if in intense pain.

At first the warriors paid no attention, for they did not care how much he suffered. But after releasing him during meal time, they grew careless about tying him up again, and left him to roll upon the ground as he pleased. He now pretended to be sicker than ever and crawled over to a nearby pool of water, where he bathed his head and then lay down as if utterly exhausted.

Behind the pool was a clump of bushes, and back of this a stretch of dense timber. Once in the timber he felt that he could hide until nightfall and then make his way down the lake shore in the direction of Fort Oswego. Perhaps he might even find a canoe, for the Indians had a large number of these craft, hidden in various coves and creeks.

Henry had to move with extreme caution, for he realized that one mistake might cost him his life. Once or twice he saw the warriors gaze toward him and each time he led them to believe that he was in as great a pain as ever.

Presently there was a shouting at the lake front, announcing the arrival of more Indians, and all of the warriors on land looked in that direction. Now was his chance, and with the swiftness of a deer released from a trap he leaped across the pool and

dove into the clump of bushes. He did not stop, but at the risk of scratching himself in a dozen places, tore his way along into the timber and went on and on, pell-mell, fetching up against more than one tree and tripping over one big root after another. Once he went into a hole up to his knee and came close to breaking his leg, which, in the end, would undoubtedly have cost him his life. But he freed himself and did not stop but continued his course, limping deeper and deeper into the forest.

A yell of rage told him that his escape was discovered, and soon he heard several Indians thrashing around through the brushwood, while others spread out for a search through the forest. There was no doubt but that they meant to re-take him were such a thing possible.

"But they shan't do it," he muttered, through his set teeth. "I must get away somehow!"

When half a mile had been covered he was surprised to find himself within sight of the lake. At first he imagined that he had gone around in a circle and brought up at the point from which he had started, but soon he saw that the spot was a strange one, some distance south of the Indian camp.

His injured shin hurt him not a little and he was glad enough to plunge into the water up to his knees. He had come out on a little bay and here several

overhanging trees and bushes afforded him good shelter. He secreted himself as best he could and awaited developments.

The Indians came within a hundred yards of the spot, but no closer, and before nightfall he was left entirely alone. By this time the scraped shin felt better, and he waded out to the lake proper, the water being scarcely up to his knees.

As night drew on, he could see a faint light up the shore, which told him where the Indian camp lay. All around him was silent and deserted, only the occasional cry of a bird breaking the stillness.

Henry felt that he must get some sleep, or he would be unable to undertake the journey toward Oswego in the morning, and with this in view sought out a comfortable spot where he might lie down. Nothing came to disturb him during the night, and by sunrise he arose feeling decidedly refreshed.

A storm was approaching—the same which was to prove so disastrous to the batteaux on the lake, and Henry had not covered many miles along the lake front when it burst on him in all of its fury, causing him to seek shelter under a cliff of rocks some distance away from the water. The lightning was sharp and he heard more than one tree in the forest go down with a crash. But the storm did not

last in that vicinity, and in two hours it was over, although the drifting clouds still hid the sun from view.

The storm proved a great blessing to Henry, for after it was over he came across two squirrels that had been killed by it and also a number of birds. He had not had a mouthful to eat for twenty-four hours and he now set about making himself a fire and cooking the game. He had a flint and steel, which the Indians had not taken from him, and soon he had a blaze in a hollow, where it would not be noticed.

Having satisfied the cravings of his stomach, he renewed his journey along the lake front. The storm had washed a number of things ashore and presently he came upon an upturned Indian canoe, one of the rougher sort, made of a hollowed-out log.

"Hullo, that's better than nothing," he told himself, and righted the canoe, although not without difficulty. There was also a paddle on the beach, and soon he was on board the craft and paddling southward with all the skill he could command.

As he moved over the waters of the lake he kept his eyes behind as well as in front of him, wondering if the Indians would discover what he was doing. But they were out of sight, nor did a single warrior show himself anywhere.

It was growing dark again when Henry brought his canoe to a sudden stop and then turned hastily shoreward. Far ahead he had seen another craft, holding two men. That they were whites he was sure, but whether French or English was still to be determined. He moved his canoe into a cove, and secreting himself in the bushes awaited the approach of the strangers.

Soon the boat came close enough for him to make out the voices of the newcomers. One voice sounded strangely familiar, and peering through the bushes Henry was overjoyed to recognize Sam Barringford, who was sitting in the bow of the boat, rifle in hand, while his companion was rowing.

"Sam! Sam!" he cried, as he rushed forward. "Oh, Sam, how glad I am to see you!"

"Well, by the eternal, ef it ain't Henry!" shouted the frontiersman, in almost equal joy. "This is dumb luck an' no mistake. Why, me and Gangley came out on purpose to see ef we couldn't find out what had become of ye! Are ye alone?"

"Yes."

"Any Injuns about here?"

"There are a number up the shore—about ten or fifteen miles from here."

The boat was turned into the cove and soon Henry and his old friend were shaking hands, and then the

young soldier shook hands with Gangley, who was an old hunter from Pennsylvania. The youth told his story in full, to which the others listened closely.

"I reckon the best thing we can do is to git back and tell Colonel Haldimand how matters stand," said Barringford. "If the French are a-coming this way he'll want to know it."

The craft Barringford and Gangley occupied was large enough for three persons and soon Henry was on board. Then the boat was turned about and the trip to Oswego began.

On the way Barringford told about Dave's departure with the force under General Prideaux. He also asked if Henry had learned anything concerning little Nell.

"Not a word, although I questioned the Indians all I could," answered the youth.

Gangley was an expert at handling a small boat and the craft fairly flew through the water under his command and by the united efforts of those on board.

They were just coming in sight of the fort at Oswego when the sounds of distant firing reached their ears. At first there were a few scattering shots, followed, some minutes later, by a regular volley.

"The French have arrived!" cried Henry. "That's a regular battle!"

"Right you are, lad," returned the frontiersman. "See, there are their boats—a goodly number of 'em, too!"

"What shall we do?"

"Better land up the shore a bit and take to the woods. It won't do for us to show ourselves in the open down there—they'd pick us off in no time."

Gangley also agreed that this was best, and the boat was immediately turned toward shore. They leaped out without delay, and hiding the craft, proceeded without loss of time in the direction from whence the shots had come.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### NEWS OF IMPORTANCE

When General Prideaux left Oswego for Fort Niagara he was well aware that the French would more than likely make an attack on the new fort Colonel Haldimand was building, consequently, he cautioned that officer to be on his guard at all hours of the day and night.

But Haldimand needed no word of warning. His military training was of a high order, and the very first thing he did before setting his men to work to cut logs for the new fort was to have them arrange the pork barrels, containing a large portion of their food, in a circle, and outside of this lay a dense mass of brushwood in such a fashion that to climb over or through it would be no easy task.

This "pork fort" as it was called later on, caused many a laugh, yet it proved no mean defense, as we shall soon see. Behind the barrels Haldimand planted such cannon as Prideaux had left him; and then went to work to build the fort proper without loss of time.

The French came over the lake with as much secrecy as possible. In the darkness they landed behind some brushwood and tall timber and took up what they thought was a position of advantage.

The battle began the next day, while the English were hard at work chopping down trees and cutting them up into proper sizes for the new fort. A scout gave the alarm and this was immediately followed by several shots from the French and the blood-curdling war-cry of the hostile Indians.

Realizing at once that the enemy had tried to steal a march on him, Haldimand ordered his command to stop work and make for the "pork fort." Dropping their axes, the soldiers and pioneers seized their guns and ran for the shelter of barrels and brushwood. Several were wounded, one seriously, and seeing this, the command was given to fire in return, and something of a pitched battle occurred. But the Frenchmen between the English and the improvised fort were easily scattered, and then Haldimand brought up his troops inside the barrel barricade and manned his guns with such vigor that all of the enemy lost no time in seeking the shelter of the forest so close at hand.

It was this first encounter which reached the ears of Henry and his friends. By the time they were on shore the firing had ceased and utter silence pre-

vailed as they crept slowly forward in the direction of Haldimand's command.

"Do you think it possible that the French have withdrawn?" asked Henry, presently, as Barringford put up his hand as a signal to halt.

"I think they are up to some trick," was the low answer. "Hist! down with ye!"

Barringford had seen a tall French soldier moving toward them. The fellow was a sharpshooter and carried his rifle ready for immediate use.

The soldier was coming directly toward them and in a moment more Henry felt they would be discovered. Then, without warning, Barringford leaped forward like a lightning flash, caught the soldier by the throat, and bore him to the ground.

Before Henry could recover from his bewilderment it was all over, and the soldier lay flat on his back, for in going over his head had struck on a sharp rock, rendering him unconscious. Barringford took the man's gun and his ammunition box and handed them to the youth. "Now you're armed as good as any o' us," he whispered. "It's lucky I cotched him jest right, otherwise we might have had to do some powerful rasselin', eh? Come."

Once again they moved forward, until they felt the barricade of pork barrels could not be more than

a hundred yards distant. Then a fresh firing broke out on their left, and soon fifty or more French soldiers hove into sight as they were making a detour from one side of Haldimand's defense to the other.

"Come, we must get out of here!" shouted Barringford, and as the enemy came closer, he fired at the leading soldier. Henry and Gangley also emptied their pieces and three of the enemy went down, all badly wounded.

Running with all possible swiftness, our friends soon reached a point where they could see some of the pork barrels. Barringford held up his hands and was recognized.

"Come in!" was the cry. "Don't stay out there!" And then the three went forward again. But the French had also noticed them and half a score of rifles were turned in that direction. Henry felt a bullet sing unpleasantly close to his head and then saw Barringford, who was close beside him, stagger and go down in a heap.

"Oh, Sam!" he cried, in deep horror, "are you hit?"

There was no reply to this, and Henry saw the blood beginning to show itself around the old hunter's neck. In desperation he caught up Barringford's body and commenced to drag it to the en-

trance between the pork barrels. Gangley assisted him and soon they were behind the temporary shelter with their burden.

"I hope he isn't dead?" said Henry, as he surveyed the motionless form. "Isn't there a surgeon handy?"

A medical officer soon appeared, and Barringford was carried to an improvised hospital but a short distance away, and here the medical man made a hasty examination.

"He isn't dead, but he's pretty hard hit," was the surgeon's conclusion. "I'll do what I can for him. No, you can't help me. Better go to the front and do your duty. There is no telling how strong the French are, and if they defeat us, you know what we can all expect—a dreary life in a Canadian prison—or worse."

There was no time to say more, for the shooting had now started up once more. It came from three sides. The enemy remained hidden behind the trees and it was only occasionally that the English could get a shot in return.

"Will they make a general attack, do you think?" asked Henry, of Gangley.

"That depends on how strong they are," was the reply.

It was a fearfully hot day and those behind the

improvised fortification suffered much both from heat and thirst. It was only occasionally that a French soldier or an Indian showed himself and often he was picked off before he could again find shelter.

Presently, about two in the afternoon, came a fierce yelling of Indians to the west of the fort, and the redskins could be seen moving through the forest, although they took care not to expose themselves too much to an attack.

"They are coming!" was the cry.

But Haldimand was not to be caught by any trick, and he divided his force, one half to meet the expected attack of the redmen and the others to guard the side upon which the French were still located.

But the attack did not come off. Not over a score of redmen ran out into the open, and when three of these were stretched lifeless by the rangers, or the Royal Americans, as they were officially designated, the remainder ran back with all possible speed.

After this came another lull, and Henry ran to where Barringford had been placed. He found the old frontiersman propped up against some brushwood, over which a pair of blankets had been spread. He tried to smile at the youth.

"Got it putty bad," said Barringford, in a low voice. "In—the—neck—can't talk."

"Then don't say another word, Sam," returned Henry tenderly. "I am glad to learn it's no worse. You keep quiet. I reckon we are safe, so far;" and that was all that was said between them.

"He'll be all right in a few days," said the surgeon. "But he had a narrow escape. Had the bullet cut in half an inch deeper it would have gone through his windpipe."

Slowly the hours dragged by after this, with only an occasional shot. But now Haldimand was laying his plans for moving on the enemy. Some guns were brought into play on a certain bit of forest before the pork barrel fort and when these were discharged the cries that followed told that the French had been taken by surprise.

"They are running for their boats!" was the announcement, a little while later. "They are on the retreat!"

A cheer went up at this announcement, and regardless of orders some of the rangers leaped out over the barrels and brushwood and made after the French, who seemed to have suddenly become panic-stricken.

It was seen that La Corne was indeed retreating. The French soldiers and the Indians were running

in all directions, and in the excitement a dozen or more were sent sprawling on the shore.

"After 'em! After 'em!" was the cry. "Don't let 'em escape!" And then came the rapid crack-cracking of guns and rifles and long pistols and thirty of the enemy were killed and wounded. La Corne was struck among the number, but not seriously wounded.

With the rangers who left the fort was Henry, and soon he and Gangley and four other pioneers were hurrying after a number of Indians who were fleeing up the lake shore. These were the redmen who had made Henry a prisoner and he was anxious to "square accounts" with them.

The Indians had three canoes secreted in the bushes and they were anxious to gain possession of the craft. After a swift run of ten minutes they came in sight of the spot where the canoes were located. But now the rangers opened fire on them and two of the Indians went down, both wounded. The Indians returned the fire with a rifle shot and several arrows, but nobody was struck.

"They shan't git away so easy!" cried Gangley, and as the redmen leaped into their canoes, he opened fire again. The others reloaded with all speed, and a volley was delivered as the light craft shot out into the lake. One more redman was brought low

and fell into the water with a loud splash, and then the canoes drew out of range with all possible speed.

The Indian who had fallen into the water was a stranger to Henry. He was not seriously wounded and not wishing to drown, came ashore, although evidently in terror of the whites.

"Don't shoot him!" cried Henry, as two of the others leveled their guns.

"Why not?" drawled one of the rangers. "Reckon as how he desarves it, don't he?"

"I want to question him."

In a few minutes more the Indian was a prisoner, and then the rangers turned their attention to the pair that lay wounded some distance back. One was dying, but the other suffered only from a slight wound in the leg. The dying redman was left where he had fallen and the others were taken back to the fort.

It was not until some time later that Henry got a chance to question the captured Indians. One could speak fairly good English but it was only with difficulty that the young soldier could make him tell anything concerning the Indians in general and the prisoners they were holding.

But after Henry had taken the trouble to dress the wounded one's hurt and had supplied him with water and food, the redman's tongue became loosened, and

he listened to what Henry had to say with increased interest.

"Yes, Missapaw has seen the little girls," he said. "Two are of the same birth, and the other is called 'Nell.'"

"And where are they now?" demanded Henry, eagerly.

"They are with some Indians and some French traders, in the west—at the mighty fall of waters."

"You mean Niagara Falls?"

The Indian nodded.

"And who are the French traders?"

"Missapaw knows but one of them—a trader of the Kinotah."

"What, you don't mean Jean Bevoir?" cried the young soldier.

"Yes, that is his name."

"And they are helping the Indians to hold the little girls captive. What is their object?"

"To make the little girls' fathers pay well for the return of the little ones," was the answer.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### SOMETHING ABOUT FORT NIAGARA

We will now go back to Dave, at the time he was thrown into the waters of the lake, in the midst of the storm.

For the moment after the waters closed over him, the young soldier was too bewildered to do more than throw out his hands wildly. He attempted to cry out, and the water rushed into his mouth, almost drowning him. Then he spluttered and struggled, and more by instinct than anything else began to strike out.

When he came up he took a fresh breath and dashed the water from his eyes. He could see but little in the darkness, and although he could hear many cries, and a shout or two from distant boats, yet the craft remained invisible to him.

At length another flash of lightning showed him that one batteau had gone down and also showed him the sailor-soldier struggling near him.

"Hullo there!" shouted the other, whose name was Simon Lapp. "Can you swim?"

"Yes, but not extra well," panted Dave.

"Move this way, then—the shore's over yonder, and I think we'll soon strike bottom with our feet."

Dave did as suggested, and ranged up alongside of Simon Lapp. The proximity of the sailor-soldier gave the youth confidence, and he did his best to keep up with the man.

It was the hardest swim of his life and more than once Dave felt as if the weight of his uniform would carry him down. The two were alone in the vicinity, the others having either gone down or struck out for the uninjured boats nearest to them.

When Dave was almost exhausted he felt bottom under him, and hand in hand he and Simon Lapp waded ashore. The rain was now coming down harder than ever, and both crawled to the shelter of some overhanging trees, regardless of the danger from lightning.

"We're in a pickle, that's certain," observed Dave, when he felt able to speak. "Do you reckon anybody will come to shore for us?"

"More'n likely some of the boats have been driven ashore," answered Lapp. "Let us be thankful that our lives have been spared.

Dave was thankful, and as they crouched there in the darkness he uttered a prayer to God for His mercies, and prayed that this adventure might speedily be brought to a safe conclusion.

As we know, the storm was not of long duration, and by nightfall Dave and Lapp were walking along the shore, searching for friends, or for some signs of the other batteaux.

But, strange as it may seem, no boats showed themselves, nor did a single human being come into sight.

"Might as well give it up," said the sailor-soldier at last. "I'm too tired to stick on my pins a minit longer. Let's make a fire and dry off."

Dave was agreeable, and the fire was started, although not without great difficulty. In moving along the shore they had come across a few small fish thrown up by the fury of the wind and these they cooked and ate.

The next day found Dave and Lapp still in the woods. In some manner they had strayed from the lake front and before nightfall they had covered many miles in an endeavor to set themselves right once again. They had found no more game, and being without means of shooting anything, or even of going fishing, were almost starved for the want of food.

"We've got to do something," said Dave, on the following morning. "If we don't, we'll starve. I'm going to try to bring down some birds with sticks and stones."

He tried his best, but though he followed his plan up for fully an hour not a bird did he hit, and by that time his arm was so tired that further throwing was out of the question. In the meantime, his course had brought him out on the lake front once more, and now while he rested, Simon Lapp tried his hand at fishing, with a hook made out of a thorn and some line manufactured from threads from his shirt.

But the fish would not bite, and in an hour Lapp gave up the attempt in disgust. Each looked at the other inquiringly.

"The lake is full o' fish, and the woods full o' game—an' yet it looks like we were meant to starve, Morris," said Lapp, slowly.

"Oh, don't say that!" cried Dave. "Something may turn up—it must turn up!"

He had scarcely spoken when Lapp leaped to his feet and pointed down the lake shore. "A boat!" he cried.

There was a speck on the water, and as it grew larger, Dave saw that it was indeed a boat, quite a large affair, carrying a small sail and in addition several men at oars.

Were those in the craft friends or enemies? That was the interesting question, and Dave felt his heart beat rapidly. If they were friends all would be

well, but if enemies——? They would not wish to expose themselves, and yet to starve to death was out of the question.

As the boat came closer, they crawled behind some bushes and crouched down out of sight. Slowly the craft glided up, until it was less than a hundred yards away. Then Simon Lapp leaped up and swung his arms wildly.

"Boat ahoy!" he cried. "Boat ahoy!"

Those in the craft heard the call and the rowers stopped rowing, while all looked with interest toward the shore. Then Dave uttered a yell.

"Henry! Henry!"

"Hullo, Dave, is that you?" was the answer.

"Yes. Come in and take us on board. We are almost starved!"

"How many of you there?" questioned the officer in charge of the boat.

"Only two," answered Simon Lapp. "And unarmed at that."

"It's all right, sir," said Henry, to the officer in command. "That is my cousin, who left Oswego with General Prideaux's command. I don't know what he is doing here though."

The boat came ashore, and soon Henry was shaking Dave by the hand. The hungry ones were provided with food, and although this consisted of noth-

ing better than some boiled pork, with beans and crackers which were anything but fresh, never had a meal tasted sweeter to both.

The officer and the others listened with interest to what Lapp and Dave had to tell. They had come across the waterlogged remains of the wrecked batteaux and had been watching sharply for any signs of floating bodies. They had come across that of Lieutenant Naster and had buried it but a few hours before. The news that the lieutenant was dead caused Dave to shudder.

The rangers were bound for the Niagara River, having been sent out by Colonel Haldimand with a message to General Prideaux, telling the latter of the defeat and retreat of La Corne. It was possible that La Corne would now move onward to assist in the defense of Fort Niagara in which case measures would have to be taken to cut him off. But La Corne had been too thoroughly whipped to move westward, and, besides, he was soon after needed in other directions.

Of course the news which Henry had to tell about little Nell and Jean Bevoir was of great interest to Dave.

"Did the Indian tell you just where she was being kept?" he asked.

"He said so far as he knew the captives and the

traders were at an Indian village called Shumetta, not over two miles away from Niagara Falls. He said Jean Bevoir spent part of his time at Shumetta and the rest at Venango, where he has charge of a company of traders, who intend to fight in the French army, if the war is carried into that territory."

"I hope Bevoir does fight, and that we get a chance at him!" cried Dave. "I really think I'd take pleasure in laying him low—such a rascal as he is!"

After the privations of the past two days Dave was well content to take it easy as the boat sped on its way along the dark and silent shore of Lake Ontario, then presenting an almost unbroken line of forest and rocks, to-day the sites of many villages and thriving cities. As the craft moved on, constant watch was kept for a possible French sail, but none appeared.

It took General Prideaux's flotilla between six and seven days to make the journey westward, and it was not until the troops were landing that the boat containing Dave and Henry reached the main army. General Prideaux was at once acquainted with what had occurred at Oswego and seemed well pleased to think that La Corne's strategy had not availed him. He already knew of the loss of Lieutenant Naster

and of four others who were swept away by the storm.

Dave and Lapp had been given up for lost by their friends who had escaped from the wrecking of the batteau, and their re-appearance was hailed with delight.

It was General Prideaux's plan to land some distance from Fort Niagara, and then lay siege to the place. The soldiers disembarked as silently as possible, the trees, rocks and bushes keeping them well hidden from those in the fort. Then, while several companies were left behind to guard the boats and baggage, the rest of the army moved through the woods, the engineering corps going ahead, to throw up entrenchments as soon as such a move seemed necessary.

The old fort, which was speedily to see its last days under French rule, stood on the right bank of the Niagara River, where that picturesque stream empties into Lake Ontario. It was both large and strongly built, after the fashion of French fortification of that period. Within the outer defenses were several buildings of considerable importance, for this fort had stood as a guardian of lake and river for many years.

The commander at the fort was Captain Pouchot, an able French officer, who had seen service for

many campaigns. He had under him a force of about six hundred soldiers—trained veterans who could boast of more than one victory. Up to a short while before, there had been other soldiers in this vicinity, but not dreaming of an attack—for his Indian spies had this time failed him—the French officer had allowed these to depart—to Venango and other trading posts, and to several of the nearby Indian villages. It was mid-summer, and traders and Indians hated to do military duty when they could bring down game and make trades.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE BATTLE NEAR THE FALLS

"We are certainly in for a fight now, Henry!"

It was Dave who spoke, as he examined the priming of his new gun, to make sure that the weapon was ready for use. "That little brush day before yesterday woke the French up, and they will sail into us heavily—if they can," he added.

"Well, we came to fight," returned Henry, as he, too, looked his weapon over. "And I guess we can be thankful, all things considered, that we are here to do them battle and not killed, or laid up as Sam Barringford is."

"I hope Sam pulls through and that quickly."

"The surgeon said he would—if he'll keep quiet for a while. But it's like putting a torch to gunpowder to keep him quiet when there's a scrimmage in sight,—he's such a born fighter."

The two young soldiers were standing behind a breastworks which had been thrown up early that morning. The first works thrown up by the English engineering corps had proved untenable and the

French had fired on them with disastrous effect. But now they were comparatively safe; and the English gunners were serving their various cannon steadily and effectively, knocking the logs of the fort into bits with almost every discharge.

The fort had been under bombardment for several days, and the young soldiers had been out on the firing line three times. But only one of these times had been of any consequence and that was when a French cannon ball, hitting some loose stones, had sent the latter in their faces, scratching them both on each cheek and blinding a soldier standing between them.

The bombardment had been opened at rather long range, for General Prideaux had not known the exact strength of the French garrison. Now the worthy English general was dead, having been killed on the second day by the unexpected explosion of a shell as it was being fired by some English gunners from a small bronze mortar, generally called a coehorn.

The killing of General Prideaux placed the command of the expedition in the hands of Sir William Johnson, who up to this time had been giving all of his attention to the Indians who had volunteered to aid their English brothers. Johnson was as quick to act as he was brave, and having stationed his In-

dians where he could call upon them at a moment's notice, had the English make another advance on the next day, which brought the cannon to bear directly on the most vital parts of the fort.

Captain Pouchot was now thoroughly alarmed, and under cover of darkness, sent out messengers in various directions, to bring up the soldiers, traders, and friendly Indians from Venango, Presqu'ile, Detroit, and other points. These different forces were to join together at some point near Lake Erie and then sail down the Niagara River to the vicinity of the Falls, where they were to disembark and then march forward with the idea of attacking the English from the rear.

Having sent forth his messengers the French commander now undertook to do his best until the reinforcements should arrive. The English attack was answered with spirit, so that day after day the air was filled with shot and shell, hurled either into the fort or from it.

The attack Dave had mentioned came late that afternoon and was followed by another on the next day and still another two days later.

It was hot work, for the July sun blazed down with unmitigating vigor, and had the young soldiers not been toughened to a life in the open they would have done as many of the English grenadiers did,

fallen down in the entrenchments exhausted. There was a continual demand for water and it was fortunate for all that a good supply was close at hand. This same supply more than once saved the fort from burning down.

Both Dave and Henry had hoped to gain permission from General Johnson to go off in search of little Nell, taking several friends with them. But when they broached the subject the brave-hearted Irish commander shook his head.

"It will do you no good, young men," he said, kindly. "Stay with me, and if we win out—as we must—I will do all possible to rescue the children."

The general was sure of a victory and his spirit proved contagious to all under him. As the days went by the bombardment of the fort continued, until Captain Pouchot had lost fully half a hundred of his garrison. Impatiently he awaited the reinforcements from up the river.

But if he had expected to catch Sir William Johnson napping he was sadly mistaken. The commander of the English forces was thoroughly wide-awake, and had his scouts out in all directions, and these included a dozen old backwoodsmen and fully a score of Indians who could be depended upon to do their best, no matter what the risk. It may be as

well to mention that among these scouts was White Buffalo, who had followed from Oswego to Fort Niagara, not alone to aid Sir William Johnson but also to assist the Morrises to find little Nell.

The attack on the fort had begun on the seventh of July. On the twenty-fourth word came in through the spies that a force of French and Indians were coming down the river from Lake Erie. This body of soldiers, traders and Indians was twelve hundred strong, and was commanded by several French officers of note. The traders were of the most savage and lawless kind and many of them were in the habit of dressing like the Indians and smearing their faces with the same warpaint.

The word concerning this body came in late in the day and that night General Johnson ordered forward a large part of his force, including some grenadiers, some rangers and his Indians. The troops were cautioned to move forward without making unnecessary noise, and to be certain of what was taking place before opening fire.

"Now for some real fighting!" cried Dave. "This won't be any such play as besieging the fort."

"Well, that hasn't been play to my notion," answered Henry. "At least it wasn't play when that cannon ball came and blinded poor Campbell."

"Well, I'm with ye, lads!" came a voice from

behind them, and turning swiftly they beheld Sam Barringford standing there, rifle in hand, and with his throat done up in a bandage.

"Where in the world did you come from?" ejaculated Henry. "Why, you ought to be in the hospital!"

"Not by a jugful, Henry! I'm well enough ag'in, I can tell ye—though I allow as how my neck's a bit stiff."

"How did you get here?"

"Came up on a boat that brought some ammunition. Reckon I'm jest in time, too, eh?"

"You ought to take it easy, Sam," said Dave. "You've done enough—"

"Cut it short, lad; I can't sit still when thar's a scrimmage on—no two ways about it. Besides, I promised your folks to stay with ye, remember thet, —an' I'm bound to keep my promise. Come along, an' tell me what ye've been up to sence we parted company."

As they trudged forward, along the Indian trail which led along the bluff on the east side of the Niagara River, the youths related their various adventures. Barringford was astonished to learn how Dave had been nearly drowned and starved and how Henry and others had come up just in the nick of time.

"It's the work of an all-wise an' all-powerful Providence, thet's what it is, lads," he said, reverently. "When we can't help ourselves it does seem jest like an arm reached down out o' the clouds to give us a lift."

On and still on went the soldiers, some keeping to the trail and others skirting the river and the thick forest beyond. To those who had been on guard duty during the day it was a tiresome tramp, but the life of the soldier, as I have had occasion to say before, is not all glory, but is usually a mixture of one-tenth glory and nine-tenths work and duty-doing.

At last came the welcome command to halt. The soldiers were now less than a mile away from the falls and in the stillness of the early morning the great body of falling waters could be distinctly heard—a muffled roar which keeps on day and night now just as it did in those days and just as it has done probably for centuries upon centuries.

The rangers to which our friends belonged came to a halt in a little grove of trees and both Dave and Henry were glad that they were not called upon to do picket duty. They sank down to rest, and despite the undertone of excitement observable on every hand, fell into a light slumber, from which

Barringford did not arouse them until it was absolutely necessary.

When they awoke there was a fierce yelling in the distance, followed by a number of scattering shots. The fight had opened between the Mohawks on one side and the Iroquois on the other. Soon the French traders leaped into the fray, and then the soldiers on both sides followed.

The French and their allies had come around the falls by the portage trail and the battle began at some little distance below the falls. The Indians fought like so many demons, both sides taking as many scalps as possible. Soon the forest and the open space were filled with gun-smoke.

"Forward!" came the cry. "Forward! We must drive them back! They must never reach the fort!" And forward went our friends, and in a moment more Dave, Henry, and Barringford found themselves in the very thickest of the fray.

Dirty looking traders confronted them, several Dave had seen before, on the Kinotah, and some of these tried their best to bring down the son of the English trader they so hated. But Dave was untouched, although one bullet did pierce his jacket. The rush of the English rangers was successful and soon the Frenchmen scattered to the right and the left.

But now a body of French soldiery was coming forward on the double-quick. The rangers had no time to re-load their weapons, and so leaped forward for a hand-to-hand contest, such as soldiers of to-day know little or nothing about, where bayonet met clubbed musket and sword the long and equally dangerous hunting knife of the pioneer, and where many a contest was settled in short order with the naked fist, if no better weapon was handy. It was a time to bring out "real grit" in the best meaning of that term.

Henry had discharged his gun and was now trying to club off two French soldiers who had attacked him with their bayonets. He struck one of the enemy on the head, sending him reeling, but the force of the blow made him lose his balance and he too fell, but only upon his knees.

"Ha! now we have you!" cried another French soldier, close by, as he saw Henry slip, and lowering his bayonet he charged on the youth, intending to run him through on the spot!

## CHAPTER XXX

### INTO THE NIAGARA RAPIDS

For the moment it looked as if poor Henry's last moment on earth had come and the young soldier closed his eyes to meet the fate he thought could not be averted.

"Back with you!" came a cry from Dave, and making a wild leap forward, he swung his clubbed musket at the French soldier's head. The blow, however, merely grazed the enemy's cap, which fell upon the forest sward. Then the Frenchman drew back and made another desperate lunge forward.

At that instant a rifle report rang out. Sam Barringford, who had just reloaded his weapon, had seen Henry go down and was as quick to act as Dave had been. He was in such a position that he could not get a full view of the Frenchman but he could see the extended arms and the gun with the bayonet, and he fired at these.

His aim was true, and with a howl of pain, as the bullet cracked his elbow joint, the enemy dropped the weapon just as the bayonet point was entering

He swung his clubbed musket at the French soldier's head.
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the cloth of Henry's jacket. Then, finding himself wounded and defenseless, the Frenchman lost no time in retreating and was soon lost to sight behind the trees.

Now was no time to thank Barringford for what he had done, for the fighting still continued on every side. Dave helped his cousin to his feet, and soon the pair, with the faithful old frontiersman, were again in the thick of the fray. The forest was heavy with gun smoke so that in spots but little could be seen, and more than once it happened that one side or the other fired into the ranks of its friends.

Inside of quarter of an hour our friends found themselves in something of an open spot bordering the river, at a point where the rapids rushed furiously along the rocks on their way to the lake. Here, as they were moving forward, to join a body of English soldiers fifty yards away, they were suddenly confronted by a body of Iroquois who came upon them uttering the most horrible war-cries the youths had ever heard, and brandishing their tomahawks and scalping knives.

"On yer guard thar!" came from Barringford. "They air after us hot-footed now!"

He swung around, and as the nearest Iroquois came within a dozen steps of him, he let the savage

have the contents of his gun full in the breast, killing him instantly. Then the boys also fired, wounding two others. This halted the Indians for the moment, but quickly recovering, they darted forward with increased fury, bent upon adding the scalps of the three whites to their belts ere the battle should come to an end.

It was Dave who found himself the first attacked. A tall Iroquois, straight as an arrow, leaped upon him and tried to stab him with a hunting knife. The young soldier warded off the blow, with his gun, and in a trice the pair were locked in each other's arms and swaying back and forth over the rocks. The Indian muttered something between his set teeth, but Dave did not understand what was said.

Henry and Barringford were also attacked, so they could do nothing for their companion. The Iroquois were ten strong, and soon it looked as if all our friends would undoubtedly be killed and scalped.

The Indian who had attacked Dave had made a desperate clutch at the young soldier's throat. But Dave had caught the wrist so quickly thrust forth, and now the two were fighting with one arm of each thrust out and up and the other wound tightly about the enemy's neck. Thus they swayed back and forth, each doing his best to force an advantage and

each failing. Both looked about, thinking that possible assistance might be at hand, but all the others engaged in the combat were too busy to notice them.

Slowly but surely the pair drew closer to the edge of the river, which at this point was some fifteen or twenty feet below the ledge of rock upon which the combat was occurring. In the stream the rapids swirled and boiled in every direction, occasionally sending a shower of spray up to their very feet. The dampness made the rocks slippery and both had all they could do to retain their footing.

At last Dave seemed to obtain a slight advantage. The Indian relaxed his vigor for just a moment and in that fraction of time the young soldier caught him by the throat and gave him such a squeeze that the redman's windpipe was well-nigh dislocated.

At this the Indian uttered a grunt and began to back away, but still retained his grip on Dave. This brought the pair closer than ever to the edge of the rocks.

"Look out!" came a sudden cry from Henry, who happened to see the movement. "Dave! Dave! Look out!"

Dave heard the cry, but was powerless to heed it. At the very edge the rocks were worn smooth, and of a sudden the Indian slid backward dragging

the young soldier with him! Over went both, into the flying spray, to disappear a moment later beneath the surface of the fiercely running rapids.

Henry saw the fall and his heart leaped into his throat, for he felt that it could mean but one thing for his cousin, and that death. But even had he been able to do anything, which was doubtful, he was given no chance, for now the advancing Iroquois surrounded him and Barringford upon every side.

The scene to follow was one which it would be hard for pen to describe. Feeling that it might be his last stand on earth, Barringford's whole willpower arose to the occasion, and once again he was the very personification of reckless courage, just as he had been when the Indians had attacked the trading post on the Kinotah. With clubbed musket he whirled around from right to left and left to right so quickly that the human eye could scarcely follow him.

"Come on, ye red sarpints o' the woods!" he yelled. "Come on, an' I'll show ye the real trick o' fightin'! Ye don't know what a roarin', blusterin' hurricane ole Sam Barringford is when he's woke up, do ye? Thar's one fer ye, an' thar's another, an' another! Cut me loose, will ye! I'll show what a generwine ole Injun fighter kin do! Yer nuthin'

'tall but a lot of measly pappoose, thet's wot ye be, an' don't yer go fer to wake up sech a roarin' mountain painter as me!"

Barringford had just brought down his third Indian and was still at it, with Henry lending all the aid possible, when there came a sudden war-cry from the woods to the north of the opening. It was the cry of Indians friendly to the English, and scarcely had it ended when White Buffalo burst into view, followed by a number of his braves.

A glance told the chief what was happening, and without delay he leaped in to aid our friends, and in a moment more the redmen on both sides were having a battle as warm as the one just ended. But the Iroquois had suffered about all they could stand, and soon those that were able to move were in full retreat, while the others were just as speedily dispatched and scalped by the redmen who had put them to flight.

As soon as he was at liberty to do so, Henry approached the edge of the rocks, to ascertain, if possible, what had become of his cousin. Here, while he was peering eagerly down into the rapids and flying spray, Barringford joined him. Both were suffering from several small wounds from which the blood flowed freely, but to these hurts they, just then, paid no attention.

"Whar's Dave?" was the frontiersman's question, as he proceeded to reload his rifle.

"Why, didn't you see him, Sam? He and a redskin had each other by the throat and both went over into the river."

"Gollywhoppers, Henry, you don't mean it! When was thet?"

"Just before White Buffalo and his braves came up."

"And they went over right here?"

"Yes."

Barringford peered sharply down the stream for nearly half a minute, while Henry did the same.

"Don't see no sight of 'em; do you?" he said, slowly.

"No." Henry drew a long breath and shuddered. "Oh, Sam, I—I hope Dave isn't drowned!"

At this the backwoodsman shrugged his shoulders.

"So do I hope it, lad. But war is war ye must remember, an' we can't expect to kill the enemy right along an' hev nuthin' happen to us."

"Yes, but—" Henry could not finish because of the lump which came up in his throat. "I'm going to follow the river and see if I can't find out the truth," he blurted out at length.

"Sure. Come on."

The fighting now seemed to be at an end in that neighborhood, and although they could hear gunshots in the direction of the falls, and further to the southward, not a French soldier or an unfriendly Indian remained in sight.

For the day had been irretrievably lost to the enemy, and with one hundred and fifty of the French and Indians killed, and over one hundred French taken prisoners, the remainder of the attacking force had fled in wild confusion past the falls and upper rapids to where lay the boats which had brought them down from Lake Erie. Into these boats they tumbled with all possible speed and sped in the direction whence they had come. They were followed by some of the English and by Indians, who ran along the shore for a distance of half a mile, shooting down every enemy who could be reached by bullet or arrow.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### FALL OF FORT NIAGARA

So intent were Dave and his enemy on getting the better of each other that neither noticed their close proximity to the river until it was too late to do anything to save themselves.

Down they went through the flying spray, to strike the boiling waters which flowed so rapidly at the base of the rocks. Both went under like a flash and with equal quickness were borne along by that treacherous current which had proved the death of so many in the past and will most likely bring death to many more in the future.

The redman did not relax his hold even when both had been under the surface for some time. To him it was a struggle to the death, and he cared not how the grim terror might come, so long as the hated white person should go down with him.

But Dave, much younger, and with the hope of youth in his veins, did not intend to give up thus easily. As the waters of the river closed over him the idea of further battle with his opponent ended,

and his one thought was now of how to save himself from drowning. He had been warned of the stream's treachery, and he knew that to keep from perishing would be no easy task.

With all the strength he could command he essayed to push the Indian away from him. But the warrior clung closer, for he could not swim and knew he could gain nothing by being left to himself. Thus the pair continued to struggle, and in the meanwhile the current carried them further and further away from the spot where the unfortunate tumble had occurred.

"I must get loose somehow!" thought the youth. "If only I could break that hold on my throat!" But the hold was like that of a steel band, and instead of loosening it seemed to grow tighter, until poor Dave's head began to swim and he gave himself up for lost. He drew up his knee and forced it against the Indian's breast, but still his endeavors had no effect. And now the water began to enter his mouth and nose and he felt himself growing unconscious. A thousand thoughts flashed through his mind—of Henry and Sam, and of his father and the other dear ones left behind. Was this to be the end of all—this drowning in the grasp of a hideously painted Indian?

Suddenly came an awful shock which threw Dave

heels over head in the swirling waters. In their rapid passage down the stream, the Indian's head had struck fairly and squarely on a jagged rock just below the surface. The fearful impact of the blow had crushed in the warrior's skull like an egg-shell, and instantly his hold relaxed, and in a moment more the body passed from sight.

The shock threw Dave on another rock, rising less than a foot above the surface of the stream. Amid the foam and spray he felt the edge of the stone and by instinct more than reason he clutched at it wildly and held fast. Then, as he recovered his breath, he drew himself up until his head and his back were out of the water. His feet swung around with the current and there he remained, with the water tugging strongly to drag him down from his temporary place of safety.

He was in this position when discovered by the sharp eyes of Henry and Sam Barringford, and with all possible speed they ran down to the bit of shore which stuck out to within thirty feet of Dave's resting place.

"Dave! Dave!" called Henry. "Are you all right?"

"Henry! Help me! I—I can't stand th—this strain much longer," was the answer, delivered with a jerk and a gasp.

"We'll have to git a rope," came from Barringford. He raised his voice. "Hold tight, Dave, and we'll save you!"

He was off on the run then and Henry heard him crashing along the trail of the portage. Dave could hear but little save the pounding and rushing of the river torrent on all sides. He looked toward his cousin through the flying spray and the appeal went straight to Henry's heart.

The young soldier looked around. Not far away grew a number of saplings. He leaped toward the nearest, and with his hunting knife commenced to hack it down. The task was almost completed when Barringford reappeared.

"Thought I knowed whar I could git a rope," said the backwoodsman, as he held up the article. "Seen a dead Frencher with it a spell back. Going to git a tree, eh? Perhaps we'll need thet too. Let's try the rope fust."

He made a noose, and flung it forth with care. It slid close to where Dave lay, but the youth failed to grasp it. Then the rope was flung a second and a third time.

At last Dave caught the noose, and managed, although not without great difficulty, to slide it up his left arm above the elbow. This would leave his hands free to battle with any obstruction which

might threaten him in the dangerous passage from the rock to the shore.

"Are you ready to be pulled in?" queried Barringford.

"Yes, but be careful. There's a sharp rock just below this point. I just caught sight of it," answered Dave.

"We'll pull you up stream—if we can," answered the backwoodsman.

In another moment Dave was again in the mad current. Planting their feet firmly between cracks in the rocks on shore, Henry and Barringford pulled in as quickly as possible.

As all had supposed, the current swung Dave down the stream and then flung him up along the rocks lining the bank. Still holding the rope Barringford told Henry to run down and help his cousin out of the water, and this the young soldier did.

Poor Dave was more dead than alive, and for a good half hour felt too weak to move from the river bank. While he was resting, with the others beside him, a small detachment of the English grenadiers came up.

"The battle is over," said one of them, in answer to Barringford's question on that point. "We've

whipped 'em finely, and it's doubtful if they ever come back to try it over again."

"If that's the fact, then it means the fall of Fort Niagara," put in Henry. "The commander there has undoubtedly been waiting for reinforcements."

"Well, we're here to make the fort surrender," answered the soldier from England.

The soldiers had some rations with them, including some coffee, and after Barringford had started a fire whereat Dave might dry himself, the youth was given something hot to drink, which did much to revive him.

What Henry had said about the fall of the fort was true. That very evening General Johnson sent a Major Harvey to the commander of the fort, with news of the defeat at the falls and stating that the fort had better surrender at once, otherwise the Indians friendly to the English might take it into their heads to massacre all the French prisoners.

At first Captain Pouchot could not believe that the disaster to the French cause had been so great, and to convince him he was allowed to send an aide into the British camp. The aide reported that the contest was indeed lost, and thereupon, early on the following morning, Fort Niagara surrendered, and six hundred and eighteen officers and men became

English prisoners. Later on, the majority of the prisoners were sent to England while the women and the children who had been driven to the fort for protection were, at their own request, allowed to depart for Montreal.

The fall of Fort Niagara accomplished all that the English government and the colonists had hoped for. It broke the chain of defenses the French had established between the lakes and the lower Mississippi, and closely following this disaster the enemy were compelled to vacate Venango, Presqu'ile, La Bœuf, and other points, including the trading posts on the Ohio and the Kinotah. They retired to Detroit, and to the upper bank of the St. Lawrence, and the English and colonists quickly took possession of the places vacated.

It was not deemed necessary that Dave and his friends return to the vicinity of the fort the next day, and they and a party of rangers numbering eighteen encamped along the bank of the Niagara. Two of the rangers were suffering from wounds in the shoulders, and they and Dave were made as comfortable as possible, so that by the next night the young soldier felt once more like himself.

"But I never want to tumble into that river again," he said to Henry with a shudder. "I felt as if every minute was going to be my last."

"Yes, you were lucky though," answered his cousin. "Think of what that redskin got. It might have been your head instead of his."

"I've seen that Indian before, Henry. I can't tell where, exactly, but I think it was out at father's trading post."

"That's not unlikely. I suppose all those rascally French Indians came on with the French soldiers and traders to wipe us out. Well, they got what they least expected."

While the majority of the rangers were resting several of the number went off in search of game, for provisions were now running low. The most of the birds and wild animals had been scared away by the noise of battle, and the hunters had to beat about for several miles before they found what they wanted.

On the return to the camp beside the river they heard a man calling feebly in French, and moving toward the sound, discovered a French trader lying in some brushwood, covered with blood and dirt, the picture of weakness and despair. The trader had been shot in the leg and could not walk and was suffering for the want of food and water as well as attention to his wound.

"For ze love of heaven, do not leave me here,"

he begged, piteously. "Help me, kind sirs, and I vill revard you vell."

The trader was evidently a rough sort of a man, yet the rangers took pity on him, even though he did belong to the ranks of the enemy. Food and drink were furnished, and the wound washed and bound up, and then the rangers carried the prisoner with them to the camp.

Dave and Barringford saw the rangers returning, and at the sight of the prisoner Barringford leaped to his feet in high excitement.

"Jean Bevoir!" he exclaimed. "Jean Bevoir, jest as sure as fate!"

"Bevoir!" ejaculated Dave.

"Bevoir?" repeated Henry, who stood near. "Do you mean to say that fellow is Bevoir?"

"It is!" answered Barringford. "He's wounded, too."

Without waiting to hear more, Henry, followed by Dave, ran forward to where the prisoner had been placed on a moss-grown bank.

"You are Jean Bevoir," he began, sternly.

"Ah! you know me, eh?" returned the French trader. "I do not seem to know you?" and a puzzled look crossed his face.

"Then I'll tell you who I am!" roared Henry, clenching his fists. "I am Henry Morris, of Will's

Creek. This is my cousin Dave Morris. You helped to steal my little sister Nell. Where is she? Tell me this minute!"

As Henry finished he advanced, as if to strike the prisoner down where he sat. Jean Bevoir grew pale and trembled with fear.

"No! no! do not heet me!" he cried. "I no do zat. Eet ees von mistake! I no see ze gal! I——"

"Don't talk that way to me!" interrupted Henry, whose blood was thoroughly aroused. "You'll tell me where she is, and at once, or I'll—I'll—" he hesitated and looked around, and then caught up a gun standing near. "I'll blow your head off, that's what I'll do!"

It is doubtful whether Henry would have carried out his threat, but his manner was so earnest that for once Jean Bevoir, wounded as he was, was well-nigh scared to death. He put up his hands beseechingly. Then he looked at the rangers gathered around; but no one stepped to his aid, for all had heard of his doings, and of how little Nell and the Rose twins had been carried off into captivity by the Indians and of how Bevoir had plotted to hold them for a ransom. Many looked at him as little short of a brigand, or pirate, and would not have been sorry had his miserable existence been ended then and there.

"No! no!" cried the trader and clasped his hands tremblingly before him. "No shoot, please you!"

"Then tell me where my little sister is!"

"I—I know not zat—now. I—I—the Indians da run away, an——"

Bevoir broke off short. The gun had been lowered, but now it was once more brought up and the muzzle touched his forehead. He gave a yell of terror and rolled backward.

"Stop! No shoot me! I will tell you all!" he screamed. "No shoot! De gal she in von cave up de river, near de falls. Da Indians bring her dare. No shoot! I show da place. No shoot!"

"In a cave near the falls?" queried Henry.

"Yees, yees! Not far from here. She dare now, if not runned avay. I show, you no shoot me!"

"Then show the way," commanded Henry. "And remember, if you are telling a lie, it will go hard with you."

## CHAPTER XXXII

### LITTLE NELL—CONCLUSION

JEAN BEVOIR was now thoroughly cowed, and once having exposed himself he did all in his power to curry favor with those he had so deeply wronged, in the hope that they would relent in their treatment of him and perhaps grant him his ultimate liberty. But neither Henry nor the others would make him any promises, for nobody had any intention of letting him go free.

"He deserves to become a prisoner," said Dave. "And he ought to be put in solitary confinement and on bread and water."

"Right ye are, lad," said Barringford. "He's wuss nor a snake in the grass. I don't wonder Henry felt like pepperin' him on the spot."

It was well along in the middle of the afternoon and the rangers who had been out on the hunt were thoroughly tired, yet it was arranged that those who had remained in camp should move to the cave near the falls without delay, after getting minute direc-

tions from Jean Bevoir, so that there should be no chance of making a mistake in the route. A strict guard was ordered over the trader and he was given to understand that if anything went wrong with those who set out on the search for little Nell and the others the blame would fall upon him.

It must be said that the hearts of both Henry and Dave beat rapidly as they pushed along the trail leading towards the falls. Henry, as we know, loved his little sister dearly, and Dave's affection for his little cousin was scarcely less strong. Throughout the whole campaign there had not been a day when they had not thought of her and of what she must be suffering.

Barringford led the advance, having questioned Bevoir so closely that he said he felt he could find the cave in the dark. As the party moved on, all kept their eyes and ears wide open for a possible surprise by the enemy.

But as we already know, French and Indians had fled in the direction of their boats beyond the upper rapids, and the only persons met with were half a dozen braves under White Buffalo, who were out doing spy duty for General Johnson.

"Heap glad to see Dave well," said White Buffalo, when they met. "Hear Dave go into rushing waters. Glad Dave get out."

"So am I glad, White Buffalo. And how did you make out in the battle?"

"For answer the chief pointed to his girdle, at which hung two freshly taken Indian scalps. Then he pointed to the girdles of his followers, all similarly adorned. Dave nodded to show that he understood.

In these days such a showing would make one shiver, but in colonial times the taking of scalps by the Indians was such a common occurrence that it occasioned little or no comment, especially when practiced on an enemy of the same color. A few of the French soldiers had been scalped, but not many, since General Johnson had given strict orders that no mutilation of the whites would be allowed. On the other hand, the French Indians engaged in the battle had committed all the atrocities possible before retreating to the upper river and the woods.

Learning what was taking place, White Buffalo asked the privilege of joining the party with one of his braves, and this was readily granted. On they went again, through the thick undergrowth and around the rough rocks, for in those days where the town of Niagara Falls now stands was little short of a complete wilderness.

At length White Buffalo called a halt and pointed

to the ground. Barringford had been watching the trail intently.

"Fresh footprints, eh, White Buffalo?" queried the frontiersman.

"Indians close by," answered the chief, gravely. "No friends to the English."

"Then we'll go slow."

The Indian grunted, and the word was passed for every soldier to be on his guard. Barringford now calculated that they were less than quarter of a mile away from where Jean Bevoir had said the cave was situated.

Suddenly a shot rang out and this was followed by the whizzing of an arrow over Barringford's head. One of the rangers had been struck in the shoulder, although the wound was but a trifle.

"This way," shouted Barringford, who had been chosen as the leader, and all followed him to a thicket. In another moment they had caught sight of several Indians and two French traders hurrying along a trail leading to the river bank above the falls.

"Look! look!" cried Dave, suddenly. "There is little Nell now! An Indian has her in his arms!"

He was right, and soon they saw two other Indians who were carrying the Rose twins. The

dusky trio appeared but for a moment, then slipped out of sight in the timber.

With a yell to the others to follow, Dave darted after the redman who held little Nell, and Henry, Barringford and White Buffalo came close behind him. On they went through thickets which almost tore the clothing from their bodies and over rough rocks. The Indians seemed to know the way and kept a good distance ahead despite their burdens.

But now those in front had to cross a little opening, and while doing this Barringford and White Buffalo fired on them, bringing two of the number down. They were the Indians holding the Rose twins and in a few minutes more the twins, who were sobbing in fright, were safe in the rangers' care.

The Indian holding little Nell now bounded on with increased speed, making directly for the bluff overlooking the mighty falls. He knew of the opening under the falls and hoped by some chance to throw his pursuers off the scent and gain this hiding-place.

But those in pursuit were too clever for him, and in perplexity he turned, like a hunted hare, and started out on the bluff. Then, as he came again into the open, he swung little Nell to his back and held her there.

"He is making for the falls!" screamed Henry.

"What! do you think he means to jump over?" questioned Dave, in fresh horror.

"It looks like it. I reckon he's afraid if he's captured that we'll torture him."

This was probably the truth, and having glanced back once, to see if they were still pursuing him, the Indian kept on, until he was less than fifty feet away from the brink of the cataract.

"Oh, Dave—shall we—we shoot?" faltered Henry.

"We must!" was the quick answer. "It's our one chance to save Nell!"

Up came his gun, and up also came the weapons of Henry and several others of the party. Four reports rang out almost as one. The Indian staggered a dozen steps and pitched headlong, carrying little Nell down with him. Both lay perfectly still close to the brink of the cataract.

For the moment neither Henry nor Dave dared to go forward. Supposing one of those four bullets had found little Nell's body instead of that of the Indian?

It was Barringford who advanced, with several of the rangers. A glance showed him that the Indian was dead, with two bullets through the lower portion of his back. Little Nell lay beside the fallen

Indian, unconscious and with the blood flowing from a scratch on her right lower limb. She was only stunned by the shock and as Barringford picked her up she opened her eyes wildly.

"Let me go! Please let me go!" she screamed, and then, on catching sight of her preserver, stared in astonishment. "Oh, Mr. Barringford, is it really you? Oh, I'm so glad! Save me from the naughty Indian."

"The Injun is dead, Nell," he answered, and then as Henry and Dave rushed up, he added, "You are safe enough now."

Henry caught his little sister in his arms and both hugged each other tightly. The young soldier was too overcome to say a word, nor could Dave speak as he embraced his cousin. It was truly a happy moment.

In a little while the other rangers came up with the Rose twins, who were as delighted as little Nell to find themselves among friends once more. In the mean time the other unfriendly Indians and the French traders disappeared, and although White Buffalo and some of the rangers went after them, they could not be captured.

That evening, seated around a generous campfire, and after the best supper they had enjoyed for many a day, little Nell and her companions told the

tale of their captivity,—how the Indians had at first carried them off, how they had been moved from one spot to another, and of how Jean Bevoir had finally taken charge of them. The little girls were too young to understand how the rascally trader had hoped to make money by having them ransomed, but the boys and the other soldiers understood, and they made up their minds that Bevoir should not escape them and that the whole matter should be laid before the proper authorities at the earliest possible date.

"But I am so glad to be with you again!" murmured little Nell, as she nestled down between Henry and Dave. "I hope the bad Indians never carry me off again!"

"They shall never do it if I can help it," answered Henry; and Dave echoed the sentiment.

Let me add a few words more and then bring to a close this story of two young soldiers' adventures while "Marching on Niagara."

On the day following the rescue of little Nell and the Rose twins all our friends took themselves to Fort Niagara, which was now occupied by French and English combined. With the party went Jean Bevoir, a thoroughly miserable prisoner of war. The trader begged hard to be given his freedom and

offered all sorts of inducements to those having him in charge, but nobody would listen to him, and one ranger threatened to thrash him if he ever mentioned a bribe again. At the fort the matter was laid before Sir William Johnson, and Bevoir was placed under guard in the military hospital; and that was the last seen or heard from him for some time to come.

Little Nell was very anxious to get back home, to see her father and mother, as well as Rodney and her Uncle James, and it was finally decided that she should be sent back, along with the Rose twins and a number of other captives who had turned up. The party was placed in charge of a company of rangers including Hans Schnitzer, who in the siege of the fort had lost an ear, and of Barringford, who had given his word to Joseph Morris that if he found little Nell he would not leave her out of his sight until the miss was once again with her parents.

"But what will you boys do?" questioned the backwoodsman of Dave and Henry.

"We have decided to remain in the army and see this war to a finish," said Dave. "We've got the French and their Indian allies on the run, as they call it, and both of us feel that it's our duty to remain at the front."

"That feelin' does ye both credit," was Barring-

ford's answer. "Well, I reckon you'll git fighting enough before you're done. If it keeps on very much longer I allow as how I'll be back with ye sooner or later." What Barringford said about getting fighting enough was true, and the further adventures of our young friends will be related in another volume, to be entitled "At the Fall of Montreal; Or, A Soldier Boy's Final Victory." In this volume we shall meet all our old friends again and learn what they did toward establishing a lasting victory over France in Canada.

It was not long after the taking of Fort Niagara that the boys received good news from home. Matters were going well with all those left behind, and they were delighted to learn that little Nell was safe and would soon be with them. Dave's father was likewise delighted to learn that Jean Bevoir was a prisoner and that the French hold on the Ohio River and its tributaries was broken. He felt certain that the French traders and the Indians under them would never regain that which had been lost, and that in another season at the latest he would be perfectly safe in re-establishing his trading post on the Kinotah, and that by that time matters would be in proper shape for doing more trading than ever before.

"I hope what he says proves true," said Dave, as he and Henry read the letter on the subject. "I

think we deserve whatever we can get out of that trading-post, seeing how hard we have worked to gain possession of our own."

"I am glad matters are going on so well at home," returned Henry. "My, but won't mother be glad to see Nell again! They'll hug each other to death." And he wiped something like a tear from his eye as he pictured the scene in his mind.

In the darkness of the evening Dave's hand stole into that of his cousin. "I am just as glad over it all as you, Henry," he said softly. And then after a short silence he added: "There is no disputing it. God has been very good to us; don't you think so?"

For answer Henry gave his hand a tight squeeze. "We can be thankful we're alive, considering what we've gone through with. War is no holiday making."

"You're right it's not. But I'm glad I'm a soldier anyway—and I mean to do my duty to the end, no matter what comes."

A few minutes later both lay down to sleep, the hand of one resting in that of the other; and here for the time being let us leave them, kind reader, with our best wishes.

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